

**To:** Deborah Lawler[dlawler@usbr.gov]; Kerry Rae[kerry\_rae@ios.doi.gov]; Kristin Darr[kristin@centralcreativeaz.com]; Bidthah Becker[bidthahnbecker@navajo-nsn.gov]; Alkema William R (Bill)[Bill.Alkema@srpnet.com]; Robert Roessel P.E.[bob.roessel@srpnet.com]; David Hansen[david.a.hansen@aps.com]; edward.manuel@tonation-nsn.gov[edward.manuel@tonation-nsn.gov]; hopicouncil@hopi.nsn.us[hopicouncil@hopi.nsn.us]; Geraghty, Kevin[kgeraghty@nvenenergy.com]; KWilliamson@peabodyenergy.com[KWilliamson@peabodyenergy.com]; Lamar Keevama[lkeevama@hopi.nsn.us]; Maria Dadgar[maria.dadgar@itcaonline.com]; mgress@azcc.gov[mgress@azcc.gov]; Michael (Mike) Hummel[Mike.Hummel@srpnet.com]; Mark Mansfield[mmansfield@tep.com]; Renee.Eastman@srpnet.com[Renee.Eastman@srpnet.com]; russellbegaye@navajo-nsn.gov[russellbegaye@navajo-nsn.gov]; Stephen.Lewis@gric.nsn.us[Stephen.Lewis@gric.nsn.us]; Tom W. McCann[tmccann@cap-az.com]; Tobin-web@azcc.gov[Tobin-web@azcc.gov]; Theodore Cooke[tcooke@cap-az.com]; Aaron, Patricia[paaron@usbr.gov]; Acting Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs Michael S. Black[as-ia@bia.gov]; Art Kleven[art.kleven@sol.doi.gov]; Benjamin Keel[benjamin\_keel@ios.doi.gov]; Catherine Wilson[catherine.wilson@bia.gov]; Daniel DuBray[ddubray@usbr.gov]; David Murillo[dmurillo@usbr.gov]; Eric Shepard[eric.shepard@sol.doi.gov]; Frank Lupo[frank.lupo@sol.doi.gov]; Gareth Rees[gareth\_rees@ios.doi.gov]; Harrilene Yazzie[harrilene.yazzie@bia.gov]; Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; James Cason[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]; Katharine Macoregor[katharine\_macoregor@ios.doi.gov]; Keith Saxe[keith.saxe@sol.doi.gov]; Kerry Rae [REDACTED] (b)(6); Kevin Haugrud[jack.haugrud@sol.doi.gov]; Megan Bloomgren[megan\_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov]; Meyers, Leslie[lmeyers@usbr.gov]; Micah Chambers[micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov]; Michael Black[mike.black@bia.gov]; pamela williams[pamela\_williams@ios.doi.gov]; Ricky Puckett[ricky\_puckett@ios.doi.gov]; Rodney Smith[rodney.smith@sol.doi.gov]; Scott Cameron[scott\_cameron@ios.doi.gov]; Sean Torpey[storpey@usbr.gov]; Sharon Pinto[sharon.pinto@bia.gov]; george.bilicic@lazard.com[george.bilicic@lazard.com]; Chris\_Walker@peabodyenergy.com[Chris\_Walker@peabodyenergy.com]; dprobasco@navigant.com[dprobasco@navigant.com]; Donald R. Pongrace[dpongance@akingump.com]; John Bezdek[john.bezdek@dentons.com]; Shepherd, Ray[ray.shepherd@peabodyenergy.com]; Forkin, Patrick[PForkin@peabodyenergy.com]; Adam Stern <adam\_stern@ios.doi.gov>,, Benjamin Simon[benjamin\_simon@ios.doi.gov]; Joel Clement <joel\_clement@ios.doi.gov>,, Ann Miller[ann\_miller@ios.doi.gov]; kristin\_skrabis@ios.doi.gov[kristin\_skrabis@ios.doi.gov]

**From:** Palumbo, David

**Sent:** 2017-04-07T15:25:53-04:00

**Importance:** Normal

**Subject:** Re: March 1, 2017 NGS Meeting Follow-up Items

**Received:** 2017-04-07T15:26:11-04:00

[Navigant NGS ACC Presentation 04032017 Final.zip](#)

Hi All:

Please find attached the Peabody/Navigant presentation that was made to the Arizona Corporation Commission yesterday regarding NGS.

This is an updated document from the Navigant report visually shared at the March 1st meeting and it is my understanding that this document is very similar to what Peabody/Navigant will present on April 12.

If you have any questions or if Interior can help with anything, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Please have a nice weekend.

Thanks,

David

On Tue, Mar 21, 2017 at 12:40 PM, Palumbo, David <[dpalumbo@usbr.gov](mailto:dpalumbo@usbr.gov)> wrote:

Hi All:

Please find attached the Peabody presentation from our March 1 meeting.

This document contains the Peabody slides; the Navigant component of the presentation will be transmitted early next week.

If you have any questions or if Interior can help with anything, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Thanks,

David

On Fri, Mar 3, 2017 at 7:52 PM, Palumbo, David <[dpalumbo@usbr.gov](mailto:dpalumbo@usbr.gov)> wrote:

Hi All:

Thank you for your involvement in the March 1, 2017 NGS meeting.

Please find attached the Follow-up Items as well as two of the presentations.

The Attendee List and the Peabody Presentation will be transmitted under separate cover as noted in the Follow-up Items document.

Additionally, logistics for the April 12, 2017, meeting will be transmitted early next week.

If you have any questions or concerns, including about this information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Deborah Lawler at [dlawler@usbr.gov](mailto:dlawler@usbr.gov).

Have a nice weekend.

Thank you,

David

**To:** Glomb, Steve[[steve\\_glomb@ios.doi.gov](mailto:steve_glomb@ios.doi.gov)]  
**Cc:** Scott Hommel[[scott\\_hommel@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov)]; Downey Magallanes[[downey\\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov](mailto:downey_magallanes@ios.doi.gov)]; Bloomgren, Megan[[megan\\_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov](mailto:megan_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov)]; Laura Rigas[[laura\\_rigas@ios.doi.gov](mailto:laura_rigas@ios.doi.gov)]; Domenech, Douglas[[douglas\\_domenech@ios.doi.gov](mailto:douglas_domenech@ios.doi.gov)]  
**From:** Cason, James  
**Sent:** 2017-05-21T11:01:19-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Employment and Economic Activity Supported by DOI  
**Received:** 2017-05-21T11:01:56-04:00

Thank, Steve.

I'll look forward to receiving the report on DOI Employment & Economic Activity on May 23.

I'm sure the front office will be pleased to have something to offer the White House.

On Wed, May 17, 2017 at 5:52 PM, Glomb, Steve <[steve\\_glomb@ios.doi.gov](mailto:steve_glomb@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Jim -

Sorry for the delay in forwarding this message - this is for the jobs project you tasked the economists in Policy Analysis with late last week. It is in support of "June is Jobs month" that you said Scott H heard in a message from the White House. complex.

Steve

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Buckner, Shawn <[shawn\\_buckner@ios.doi.gov](mailto:shawn_buckner@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Date:** Fri, May 12, 2017 at 11:58 AM  
**Subject:** Employment and Economic Activity Supported by DOI  
**To:** "Glomb, Steve" <[steve\\_glomb@ios.doi.gov](mailto:steve_glomb@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Joel Clement <[joel\\_clement@ios.doi.gov](mailto:joel_clement@ios.doi.gov)>, Benjamin Simon <[Benjamin\\_Simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Benjamin_Simon@ios.doi.gov)>

Hi Steve,

PPA is targeting May 23 to deliver to you the memo on Employment and Economic Activity Supported by DOI. Please let us know if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you,  
Shawn

--

Shawn M. Buckner  
Office of Policy Analysis  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240  
(202) 208-3664

**To:** James Cason[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Gareth Rees[gareth\_rees@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Holley, Amy  
**Sent:** 2017-05-24T12:43:01-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Fwd: jobs report  
**Received:** 2017-05-24T12:43:24-04:00  
EmploymentSupportedbyDOI--draft--05\_23\_17\_2.docx

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Clement, Joel** <[joel\\_clement@ios.doi.gov](mailto:joel_clement@ios.doi.gov)>  
Date: Wed, May 24, 2017 at 11:49 AM  
Subject: Fwd: jobs report  
To: Steve Glomb <[Steve\\_Glomb@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Steve_Glomb@ios.doi.gov)>, Amy Holley <[Amy\\_Holley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Amy_Holley@ios.doi.gov)>  
Cc: "Benjamin M. Simon" <[Benjamin\\_Simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Benjamin_Simon@ios.doi.gov)>, Shawn Buckner <[shawn\\_buckner@ios.doi.gov](mailto:shawn_buckner@ios.doi.gov)>

The jobs paper that Jim Cason requested is attached. I asked the team last night to add a table summarizing 2017 jobs, delaying the delivery. Apologies.

-----  
Joel Clement - Director, Office of Policy Analysis, U.S. Department of the Interior 202.208.3295

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Simon, Benjamin** <[benjamin\\_simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_simon@ios.doi.gov)>  
Date: Wed, May 24, 2017 at 11:40 AM  
Subject: jobs report  
To: "Clement, Joel P" <[Joel\\_Clement@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Joel_Clement@ios.doi.gov)>  
Cc: Ann Miller <[ann\\_miller@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ann_miller@ios.doi.gov)>, "Stern, Adam" <[adam\\_stern@ios.doi.gov](mailto:adam_stern@ios.doi.gov)>, Christian Crowley <[christian\\_crowley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:christian_crowley@ios.doi.gov)>

Attached.

Ben

--

Benjamin Simon, Ph.D., Chief DOI Economist  
Office of Policy Analysis  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington DC  
202 208 4916  
[benjamin\\_simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_simon@ios.doi.gov)



**To:** Scott Hommel[scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov]; Downey Magallanes[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Cason, James  
**Sent:** 2017-05-24T14:31:06-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Fwd: jobs report  
**Received:** 2017-05-24T14:31:44-04:00  
[EmploymentSupportedbyDOI--draft--05\\_23\\_17\\_2.docx](#)

FYI. Draft Jobs report.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Holley, Amy** <[amy\\_holley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:amy_holley@ios.doi.gov)>  
Date: Wed, May 24, 2017 at 12:43 PM  
Subject: Fwd: jobs report  
To: James Cason <[james\\_cason@ios.doi.gov](mailto:james_cason@ios.doi.gov)>  
Cc: Gareth Rees <[gareth\\_rees@ios.doi.gov](mailto:gareth_rees@ios.doi.gov)>

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Date: Wed, May 24, 2017 at 11:49 AM  
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Cc: "Benjamin M. Simon" <[Benjamin\\_Simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Benjamin_Simon@ios.doi.gov)>, Shawn Buckner <[shawn\\_buckner@ios.doi.gov](mailto:shawn_buckner@ios.doi.gov)>

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Date: Wed, May 24, 2017 at 11:40 AM  
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Cc: Ann Miller <[ann\\_miller@ios.doi.gov](mailto:ann_miller@ios.doi.gov)>, "Stern, Adam" <[adam\\_stern@ios.doi.gov](mailto:adam_stern@ios.doi.gov)>, Christian Crowley <[christian\\_crowley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:christian_crowley@ios.doi.gov)>

Attached.

Ben

--

Benjamin Simon, Ph.D., Chief DOI Economist

Office of Policy Analysis  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington DC  
202 208 4916  
[benjamin\\_simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_simon@ios.doi.gov)

**To:** Katharine Macgregor[kate\_macgregor@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Hommel, Scott  
**Sent:** 2017-05-24T14:35:08-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Fwd: jobs report  
**Received:** 2017-05-24T14:35:55-04:00  
EmploymentSupportedbyDOI--draft--05\_23\_17\_2.docx

FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Cason, James <james\_cason@ios.doi.gov>  
**Date:** Wed, May 24, 2017 at 2:31 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: jobs report  
**To:** Scott Hommel <scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov>, Downey Magallanes <downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov>

FYI. Draft Jobs report.

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Holley, Amy <amy\_holley@ios.doi.gov>  
**Date:** Wed, May 24, 2017 at 12:43 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: jobs report  
**To:** James Cason <james\_cason@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** Gareth Rees <gareth\_rees@ios.doi.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Clement, Joel <joel\_clement@ios.doi.gov>  
**Date:** Wed, May 24, 2017 at 11:49 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: jobs report  
**To:** Steve Glomb <Steve\_Glomb@ios.doi.gov>, Amy Holley <Amy\_Holley@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** "Benjamin M. Simon" <Benjamin\_Simon@ios.doi.gov>, Shawn Buckner <shawn\_buckner@ios.doi.gov>

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**Date:** Wed, May 24, 2017 at 11:40 AM  
**Subject:** jobs report  
**To:** "Clement, Joel P" <Joel\_Clement@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** Ann Miller <ann\_miller@ios.doi.gov>, "Stern, Adam" <adam\_stern@ios.doi.gov>,

Christian Crowley <[christian\\_crowley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:christian_crowley@ios.doi.gov)>

Attached.

Ben

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Office of Policy Analysis  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington DC  
202 208 4916  
[benjamin\\_simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_simon@ios.doi.gov)

**To:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Timothy Williams[timothy\_williams@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Clement, Joel P[Joel\_Clement@ios.doi.gov]; Holley, Amy[amy\_holley@ios.doi.gov]; Steve Glomb [REDACTED] (b)(6) Stern, Adam[adam\_stern@ios.doi.gov]; Christian Crowley[christian\_crowley@ios.doi.gov]; Ann Miller[ann\_miller@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Simon, Benjamin  
**Sent:** 2017-06-12T11:33:35-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** FY 2016 DOI Economic Report  
**Received:** 2017-06-12T11:34:05-04:00  
[FY 2016 SHORT Econ Report Draft 2017-06-06.docx](#)

Hi Tim and Heather,

The purpose of this note is to let you know that the FY 2016 DOI Economic Report is expected to complete the surname process soon. A copy of the report is attached.

This report includes summary information on the economic contributions associated with Interior's activities. Additional information, including State-level results and interactive visualization tools, will be available on a data visualization site (the FY 2015 information can be found at: <https://my.usgs.gov/doidv/>).

If you would like us to brief you on the report or walk you through the data visualization site please let us know.

Ben

--

Benjamin Simon, Ph.D., Chief DOI Economist  
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1849 C St. NW  
Washington DC  
202 208 4916  
[benjamin\\_simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_simon@ios.doi.gov)

**To:** downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov];  
laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov];  
douglas\_domenech@ios.doi.gov[douglas\_domenech@ios.doi.gov];  
scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov[scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov];  
james\_cason@ios.doi.gov[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Heather Swift  
**Sent:** 2017-06-16T13:56:41-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** INTERIOR: Zinke shaking up senior staff — report -- Friday, June 16, 2017 -- www.eenews.net  
**Received:** 2017-06-16T13:56:50-04:00

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/06/16/stories/1060056174>

## Zinke shaking up senior staff — report

Jennifer Yachnin and Corbin Hiar, E&E News reporters

Published: Friday, June 16, 2017

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is said to be shaking up the agency's leadership. Gage Skidmore/Flickr

In a step toward the planned reorganization of the Interior Department, Secretary Ryan Zinke notified dozens of career officials that they will be reassigned at the end of this month, *The Washington Post* reported this morning.

Dozens of Senior Executive Service employees — career officials within the federal government — received letters yesterday informing them that they may be reassigned as early as June 28, the newspaper said.

"Personnel moves are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations through matching Senior Executive skill sets with mission and operational requirements," said Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift in an email. She noted that Zinke mentioned the "Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees."

Last week, Zinke outlined his plans for reorganizing the agency under a "joint system" that would shift federal employees from Washington to the field (*E&E News PM*, June 8).

The plan would include 13 "joint management areas," rather than have each agency report to its respective regional office.

According to the *Post*, the letters sent to as many 50 SES employees provided a 15-day notice of their looming job changes, as required by law. Zinke and all political appointees must wait at least 120 days following their confirmations to relocate any SES members. The Senate confirmed Zinke on March 1.

The newspaper reported that Interior Office of Policy Analysis Director Joel Clement, the top climate policy official, was among those to receive the notice and that he will be transferred to the Office of Natural Resources Revenue.

In addition, the *Post* said, several Fish and Wildlife Service officials received the notices, including Assistant Director for International Affairs Bryan Arroyo, Southwest Regional Director Benjamin Tuggle, Southeast Regional Director Cindy Dohner and Office of Law Enforcement Chief Bill Woody, who will move to the Bureau of Land Management.

Tuggle and Dohner have both been involved in high-profile fights over how to recover gray wolf subspecies in their regions. Arroyo, who has been leading Fish and Wildlife's fight against wildlife trafficking, last year was found by Interior's inspector general to have potentially violated federal regulations by pressuring his staff into awarding a noncompetitive contract worth more than \$256,000 ([Greenwire](#), Oct. 14, 2016).

Woody's reported move to BLM could make for a relatively easy transition. Before taking his current post in 2011, he was the director of Interior's Office of Law Enforcement and Security, where he oversaw the efforts of about 270 rangers and special agents on more than 245 million acres of BLM-managed public lands.

Prior to that, Woody worked at the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources for 15 years, a decade of which he spent leading the state agency's law enforcement unit ([Greenwire](#), Dec. 16, 2014).

**To:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov];  
laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov];  
douglas\_domenech@ios.doi.gov[douglas\_domenech@ios.doi.gov];  
james\_cason@ios.doi.gov[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Scott Hommel  
**Sent:** 2017-06-16T14:01:07-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: INTERIOR: Zinke shaking up senior staff — report -- Friday, June 16, 2017 --  
www.eenews.net  
**Received:** 2017-06-16T14:01:14-04:00

Fair

Scott C. Hommel  
Chief of Staff  
Department of the Interior

On Jun 16, 2017, at 1:56 PM, Heather Swift <[heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2017/06/16/stories/1060056174>

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The plan would include 13 "joint management areas," rather than have each agency report to its respective regional office.

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pressuring his staff into awarding a noncompetitive contract worth more than \$256,000 ([Greenwire](#), Oct. 14, 2016).

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Sent from my iPad

**To:** Scott Hommel[scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov];  
downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov];  
laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; james\_cason@ios.doi.gov[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Domenech, Douglas  
**Sent:** 2017-06-16T14:22:59-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: INTERIOR: Zinke shaking up senior staff — report -- Friday, June 16, 2017 --  
www.eenews.net  
**Received:** 2017-06-16T14:23:25-04:00

Agree. It is not like people are being fired or losing pay.

Doug Domenech  
Senior Advisor  
US Department of the Interior

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

On Fri, Jun 16, 2017 at 2:01 PM, Scott Hommel <[scott\\_hommel@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Fair

Scott C. Hommel  
Chief of Staff  
Department of the Interior

On Jun 16, 2017, at 1:56 PM, Heather Swift <[heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

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International Affairs Bryan Arroyo, Southwest Regional Director Benjamin Tuggle, Southeast Regional Director Cindy Dohner and Office of Law Enforcement Chief Bill Woody, who will move to the Bureau of Land Management.

Tuggle and Dohner have both been involved in high-profile fights over how to recover gray wolf subspecies in their regions. Arroyo, who has been leading Fish and Wildlife's fight against wildlife trafficking, last year was found by Interior's inspector general to have potentially violated federal regulations by pressuring his staff into awarding a noncompetitive contract worth more than \$256,000 ([Greenwire](#), Oct. 14, 2016).

Woody's reported move to BLM could make for a relatively easy transition. Before taking his current post in 2011, he was the director of Interior's Office of Law Enforcement and Security, where he oversaw the efforts of about 270 rangers and special agents on more than 245 million acres of BLM-managed public lands.

Prior to that, Woody worked at the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources for 15 years, a decade of which he spent leading the state agency's law enforcement unit ([Greenwire](#), Dec. 16, 2014).

Sent from my iPad

**To:** heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro Energy  
**Sent:** 2017-06-16T16:13:58-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Afternoon Energy: Zinke's Interior shakeup begins — EPA delays RFS volume release — Germany balks at LNG opening in Russia sanctions bill  
**Received:** 2017-06-16T16:14:09-04:00

By Nick Juliano | 06/16/2017 04:12 PM EDT

*With help from Eric Wolff and Ben Lefebvre*

**INTERIOR SHAKEUP:** Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has made no secret of his desire to reorganize the department, and he appears to be wasting little time before getting started. As many as 50 members of the Senior Executive Service, a select group of high-level employees, received letters from Interior Thursday informing them they would be reassigned.

According to The Washington Post, which first reported the moves, "The officials who received notices include Interior's top climate policy official, Joel Clement, who directs the Office of Policy Analysis, as well as at least five senior Fish and Wildlife Service officials — nearly a quarter of that agency's career SES staff. Among the Fish and Wildlife officials are the assistant director for international affairs, Bryan Arroyo; the southwest regional director, Benjamin Tuggle; and the southeast regional director, Cindy Dohner. Other moves include the transfer of BLM New Mexico state director Amy Lueders to Fish and Wildlife and the reassignment of Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Weldon "Bruce" Loudermilk, Acting Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Michael S. Black and Acting Special Trustee for American Indians Debra L. DuMontier."

**Jason Briefel, executive director of the Senior Executives Association**, said the employees being reassigned comprise about one-quarter of SES employees at Interior. "We're hearing as potentially as many as 50. That's definitely a large number," he told AE.

**The department defended the move.** "The president signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. ... Personnel moves are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations through matching Senior Executive skill sets with mission and operational requirements," Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said in an email.

Zinke had announced plans for a dramatic overhaul in his first speech to Interior employees. "The reorganization is going to be bold and look out, just as Teddy Roosevelt did, look out 100 years from now and make sure we're organized to address the challenges of the future," Zinke said in March. Briefing Congress on Interior's budget request last week, Zinke said one of his goals was to shift employees from D.C. out into the field and to create small teams focused on specific environmental programs.

**Welcome to Afternoon Energy.** I'm your fill-in host Nick Juliano. Send your thoughts, news and tips to [ktamborrino@politico.com](mailto:ktamborrino@politico.com), [mdaily@politico.com](mailto:mdaily@politico.com) and [njuliano@politico.com](mailto:njuliano@politico.com), and

keep up with us on Twitter at [@kelseytam](#), [@dailym1](#), [@nickjuliano](#), [@Morning\\_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

**RFS VOLUMES POSTPONED:** EPA has delayed a proposed rule setting the amount of biofuels that will go into the nation's fuel system, ethanol and oil industry sources told Pro's Eric Wolff. The rule had been expected by the end of today.

**What's the holdup?:** EPA did not respond to a request for comment, and sources could not agree on what caused the delay. An oil industry source said it was because of some back and forth between the agency and the Office of Information and Regulatory and a proposal could be expected next week.

**LNG OPENING IN RUSSIA SANCTIONS BILL ANGERS ALLIES:** The Russia sanctions bill that passed the Senate 98-2 this week has again pulled U.S. suppliers of liquefied natural gas into the fight over Europe's energy security — further straining relations with Germany in the process. Ben Lefebvre reports that the bill includes provisions opposing Nord Stream 2, a politically fraught pipeline that Russia's state-owned Gazprom is seeking to build to deliver gas to Germany. That has caught the attention of the German and Austrian governments, which saw it as an attempt to boost opportunities for U.S. companies. "The draft bill of the U.S. is surprisingly candid about what is actually at stake, namely selling American liquefied natural gas and ending the supply of Russian natural gas to the European market," German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and Austrian Federal Chancellor Christian Kern said in a joint statement. More [here](#).

**PENTAGON ON GUARD AGAINST CYBER ATTACK:** Defense Secretary Jim Mattis wrapped up a marathon week of congressional hearings on Thursday by assuring lawmakers the Pentagon is on full alert when it comes to cyberthreats. "If we'd been here 10 years ago, I'd have yawned and said ... I don't see the big problem," he told the House Appropriations Defense subpanel.

**The Pentagon is working to protect power grids** and other vital infrastructure, Mattis told House members, in the wake of a report that Russia infiltrated voter databases and software systems in 39 states. "It's an active — very active area — of security we're looking at," he said, emphasizing coordination between the Homeland Security and Energy departments and the FBI. Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joe Dunford added that the "No. 1 priority we have in the department is to defend our own DoD information technology network and then we work in collaboration with the private and public sector to make sure that we share when there is a vulnerability and the solutions to those vulnerabilities." The second, he said, is to "play the away game, if you will, prepare to deal with those threats that are outside the continental United States." So while the Pentagon isn't responsible for shielding the power grid, U.S. Cyber Command and other organizations inside help identify digital security gaps, the four-star explained. (h/t [Morning Cybersecurity](#))

**ACTIVISTS TO TECH CEOS: DUMP TRUMP.** The upcoming meeting between tech industry leaders and the Trump administration is giving activists new reason to rouse Silicon Valley's liberal workforce. SumOfUs.org, Tech Solidary and Tech Workers Coalition are among the groups calling for CEOs to bail on the June 19 meeting, and they want employees to ratchet

up internal pressure on their bosses, Steven [reports](#). "There is no socially responsible way to collaborate with this administration," SumOfUs campaign manager Nicole Carty told POLITICO. "I think the companies that we see moving forward with this administration, they're really saying something about their own nature and what they are prioritizing."

— Executives from Alphabet, IBM, Cisco and Oracle, among others, will attend the White House meeting on modernizing federal technology. Tech leaders have found themselves in a quandary since Trump's surprise victory last November. His policies on issues like immigration, climate change and transgender rights run counter to the views of Silicon Valley liberals, and yet tech executives feel an obligation to engage with federal decision makers. Embattled Uber CEO Travis Kalanick, Disney CEO Robert Iger and Tesla CEO Elon Musk have all stepped down as business advisers to Trump since he assumed office. (h/t [Morning Tech](#))

**SENATE STREAMLINERS:** The new Rural Broadband Deployment Streamlining Act from Sens. [Dean Heller](#) and [Joe Manchin](#) scored praise from CTIA, whose top lobbyist Kelly Cole estimated the 5G-friendly measure would spur \$275 billion in wireless industry investment. The bill would force the Department of Interior and U.S. Forest Service to comply with 270-day shot clocks in responding to applications. It would also require a GAO study on National Broadband Map accuracy. The bill comes as both Senate and House Commerce lawmakers turn to broadband issues in hearings next week. Here's the [text](#). (h/t [Morning Tech](#))

**MOVER/SHAKER:** Cody Stewart is replacing Jason Knox as staff director of the House Natural Resources Committee, Chairman [Rob Bishop](#) announced today. Stewart will join the committee in August, following a stint as Utah Gov. Gary Herbert's director of federal affairs and a long career on Capitol Hill. "Cody is a trusted advisor who brings to the Committee nearly two decades of experience in government and natural resource policy. Cody provides a seamless transition and is uniquely qualified to lead our staff and advance the committee's agenda," Bishop said.

## QUICK HITS:

- Trump's coal plan sends U.S. energy "back to the past": Vatican, [Reuters](#).
- Flint holds a glittering prom, far from Flint, [New York Times](#).
- Big Oil firms are exploring a new frontier in shale: Profits, [Wall Street Journal](#).
- Houston fears climate change will cause catastrophic flooding: "It's not if, it's when," [The Guardian](#).
- Anadarko allowed extra month to finish state directives following Firestone house explosion, [Denver Post](#).
- Naming rights and the battle for Alaska oil on federal land, [Alaska Dispatch News](#).
- Coal industry promotes need for more skilled workers, [Bismarck Tribune](#).

## WIDE WORLD OF POLITICS:



- Trump appears to confirm that he's [facing obstruction probe](#)
- GOP [sirens blare](#) over Georgia special election
- Amazon [buying Whole Foods](#) in \$13.7 billion deal

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## Stories from POLITICO Pro

### Senate sanctions bill pits U.S. LNG against Russian energy [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/16/2017 02:46 PM EDT

The Senate's Russia sanctions bill has put the U.S. LNG industry squarely in the fight over Europe's energy security — and brought new tension to the already strained relationship with Germany.

The [bill](#), which passed the Senate 98-2 on Thursday, includes provisions opposing Nord Stream 2, a [politically fraught pipeline](#) that Russia's state-owned Gazprom is seeking to build to increase its gas deliveries to Germany. The bill also calls for U.S. oil and natural gas exports to help cut Ukraine's reliance on Russian energy supplies.

Those provisions caught the attention of Germany and Austria, which are big supporters of the Nord Stream 2 project. U.S. relations with Germany in particular have become strained under the Trump administration, and Berlin is now criticizing the Senate for using a bill focusing on European security to sell U.S. energy.

"The draft bill of the U.S. is surprisingly candid about what is actually at stake, namely selling American liquefied natural gas and ending the supply of Russian natural gas to the European market," German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and Austrian Federal Chancellor Christian Kern said in a joint [statement](#). "Europe's energy supply network is Europe's affair, not that of the United States of America! We decide who supplies us with energy, and how they do it, and we do so based on transparency and on free market principles."

The two governments called on the U.S. State Department to alter the Senate bill, which is now on its way to the House.

Neither spokesmen for bill sponsor [Bob Corker](#) (R-Tenn.) nor the White House responded to questions.

But while Germany and Austria lodged complaints, some Eastern Europe countries have welcomed the possibility of more U.S. gas arriving to counter Russian supply. Eastern European diplomats speaking on background told POLITICO last week that they had been pleased the Trump administration had been speaking out against the Nord Stream 2 project as voraciously as the Obama administration had.

Russia provides Poland with 60 percent of its natural gas, according to Gazprom, which has shut off supply when it has suited the Kremlin's geopolitical interest.

"In our corner of Europe there is only one player," said Piotr Woźniak, president of Polish energy company PGNiG's management board. "We've been interrupted six times for no reason whatsoever from our view. We just wake up in the morning and there's no gas in the line. That was a disaster. There will be room for LNG from the United States."

Cheniere and other up-and-coming U.S. LNG exporters have already targeted Europe as a potential market for U.S. gas. A Cheniere cargo landed in Poland earlier this month, the first time U.S. gas delivery to Eastern Europe.

Tellurian, another LNG export company formed by Cheniere's founder Charif Souki, is also filling out its executive suite with former government officials familiar with European energy issues.

Tellurian recently hired Amos Hochstein, who led the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Energy Resources during the Obama administration and worked to convince European countries to diversify their energy supply.

Still, at least one major European oil company warned that U.S. LNG suppliers may be as used to exert leverage by European states the same way they are invoked by the Senate. Even European boosters of U.S. LNG may be more interested in using the vast U.S. gas supplies as a bargaining chip to talk down Russian gas prices than actually scheduling cargoes, said Spencer Dale, chief group economist at BP.

"Russia has a clear economic incentive to ensure its market share," Dale said. "[Europe] doesn't necessarily need to consume LNG if it knows it has the option to do so when the need arises. As long as you have ability to access LNG, the chances you have to get a good deal with Russia go up."

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**Liberal groups urge tech CEOs to bail on Trump meeting [Back](#)**

By Steven Overly | 06/15/2017 05:26 PM EDT

Liberal advocacy groups are calling on tech industry workers to pressure their employers to disengage from the Trump administration ahead of a White House meeting with tech executives on Monday.

Organizers at SumOfUs.org and Coworker.org are using the June 19 meeting to garner new interest in online petitions that urge Silicon Valley CEOs to stop dealings with President Donald Trump. Grassroots organizations Tech Workers Coalition and Tech Solidarity, meanwhile, issued statements to their followers this week urging them to act.

"This meeting doesn't have to happen," Tech Solidarity wrote in a [blog](#) post. "Tech employees have the power to stop it."

Tech industry leaders have found themselves in a quandary since Trump's surprise victory last November. His policies on issues like immigration, climate change and transgender rights run counter to the views of Silicon Valley liberals, and yet tech executives feel an obligation to engage with federal decision makers.

The June 19 meeting will largely focus on modernizing federal technology, including cybersecurity, cloud computing and data analytics, meaning the companies in attendance could benefit financially if the government ultimately buys their equipment, software and services.

Oracle, Cisco and IBM have confirmed their executives will attend, as will billionaire technology investor Peter Thiel. Eric Schmidt, the executive chairman of Alphabet, the parent company of Google, will also attend, according to a source familiar with the matter. Other companies have declined to confirm their plans publicly, though Apple, Amazon and Microsoft are among those scheduled to take part in the meeting, according to a media reports.

Executives from those tech giants met with Trump in December, the first big engagement for leaders of an industry that largely opposed him during the campaign. (Thiel was one of the few in Silicon Valley to back Trump publicly.)

"That meeting at Trump Tower in early December was like a punch-in-the-gut catalyzing moment for employees. That is exactly why I think this [June 19 meeting] will be a really important moment for the employees," said Michelle Miller, the co-founder and co-director of Coworker.org, a platform for worker-driven advocacy.

Technology workers, particularly engineers, hold special sway over their bosses compared to employees in other industries, many groups said. Because they have in-demand technical skills that companies often struggle to find, tech workers have more leeway to speak their mind with less fear of reprisal.

After IBM CEO Ginni Rometty congratulated Trump on his victory in an [open letter](#) in November, employees there launched a [petition](#) asserting their "right to refuse participation in any U.S. government contracts that violate constitutionally protected civil liberties." In January, Google employees organized a company-condoned walkout in protest of Trump's proposed travel ban.

SumOfUs.org, which launches online petitions in response to "corporations behaving badly," has garnered more than 80,000 signatures on a letter asking Silicon Valley executives not to collaborate with the Trump administration. They're using the June 19 meeting to collect more.

In a [message](#) to members, the group touted the decisions of Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Disney CEO Robert Iger to withdraw from Trump's business advisory councils. "Now tech leaders have the same principled choice to make," the organization said.

"There is no socially responsible way to collaborate with this administration," SumOfUs campaign manager Nicole Carty said. "I think the companies that we see moving forward with

this administration, they're really saying something about their own nature and what they are prioritizing."

Many executives have defended their ongoing engagement with Trump as a way to influence his decisions and offer a progressive counterpoint to some of his policies. In an [interview with Bloomberg](#), for example, Apple CEO Tim Cook said: "I feel a great responsibility as an American, as a CEO, to try to influence things in areas where we have a level of expertise."

"At the end of the day, I'm not a person who's going to walk away and say, 'If you don't do what I want, I leave,'" Cook added.

Apple, Amazon, Cisco, Facebook, Microsoft and Oracle did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Alphabet declined to comment. IBM pointed to an email its CEO sent to employees saying the company has a history of remaining apolitical and engaging with U.S. presidents.

Tech Workers Coalition, a collective of about 100 tech industry employees, including several from Google, advocates on labor issues and other progressive causes. Since last November, more of its work has centered around workers' opposition to the Trump administration.

In a [blog](#) post this week, the Tech Workers Coalition said tech executives' participation in the June 19 meeting shows they have a "profit-over-people mentality" despite their condemnation of Trump's proposed travel ban and decision to withdraw from the Paris climate agreement.

"I think the takeaway for progressive workers in tech is that your CEOs may represent you in a business sense but they certainly don't represent you in a political or social sense," Tech Workers Coalition organizer Matt Schaefer said in an interview.

Tech Solidarity has been perhaps the most direct. Under the headline "Boycott the Trump Summit," the group asked members to email their CEOs and tell them not to attend.

Tech Solidarity founder Maciej Ceglowski, who is self-employed, has been holding advocacy meetings with tech workers in cities across the country since November. In an interview, he said that tech workers were most angry after the initial travel ban, and he hopes the June 19 meeting will fire them up again.

"We really need to decide are we going to let ourselves be represented by these people or are we going to stand up and make our face the face of the tech industry," Ceglowski said.

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**Trump appears to confirm that he's facing obstruction probe** [Back](#)

By Kyle Cheney and Darren Samuelsohn | 06/16/2017 09:42 AM EDT

President Donald Trump acknowledged on Friday that he is under investigation for firing FBI

Director James Comey, and appeared to attack his own deputy attorney general for launching a special counsel probe that has intensified in recent days.

"I am being investigated for firing the FBI Director by the man who told me to fire the FBI Director! Witch Hunt," Trump tweeted.

The president did not immediately clarify the tweet, which likely refers to Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, but could also refer to special counsel Robert Mueller, who is overseeing the larger investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election and possible collusion between Trump's campaign and the Kremlin.

Rosenstein is overseeing the probe by Mueller, which has expanded to include whether Trump obstructed justice when he fired Comey and allegedly pressured intelligence officials to downplay or undermine the Russia investigation.

Trump's unusual Friday post — coming at the end of a work week in which he and his top surrogates have openly questioned the integrity of Mueller's probe and even floated the notion of firing the respected former George W. Bush-era FBI director — has prompted sharp rebukes from leading Democratic lawmakers, as well as seasoned veterans of past Washington scandals.

"I'm growing increasingly concerned that the president will attempt to fire not only Robert Mueller, the special counsel investigating possible obstruction of justice, but also Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein who appointed Mueller," Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the California Democrat and ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, said in a statement.

Feinstein said Trump's tweets suggest he lacks respect for the rule of law and that they amount to "a blatant violation of the president's oath of office." "[I]f the president thinks he can fire Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein and replace him with someone who will shut down the investigation, he's in for a rude awakening. Even his staunchest supporters will balk at such a blatant effort to subvert the law," she said.

Former Watergate prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste said the notion Trump would oust both Mueller and Rosenstein was "outrageous" and he likened it to the Saturday Night Massacre of 1973, when President Richard Nixon fired his attorney general and deputy attorney general because both refused to fire Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox.

"We're at a very serious inflection point in my view where we must consider whether we'll continue to be a nation of laws," Ben-Veniste said. "This is not a reality show. This is real. We have not been transported into a carnival game of whack-a-mole where you try to disable this or that independent person who pops up to do the job he or she has been given. It simply cannot square with our Constitution and our system of laws."

Trump's latest tweet Friday morning appeared to be a reference to a memo Rosenstein issued shortly after assuming his position in the DOJ. In the memo, Rosenstein published a blistering assessment of Comey's performance as FBI director, pointing to his unusual handling of last year's Hillary Clinton email investigation. But Rosenstein's memo didn't explicitly recommend Comey's firing, and Rosenstein himself later said he wrote the memo after learning Trump already intended to fire Comey.

Trump himself told NBC News he had already planned to fire the FBI director, citing in part the pressure of the Russia investigation on his White House.

Rosenstein's memo, though, did strongly suggest that a change in FBI leadership would be beneficial.

"Although the President has the power to remove an FBI director, the decision should not be taken lightly. I agree with the nearly unanimous opinions of former Department officials," Rosenstein wrote. "The way the Director handled the conclusion of the email investigation was wrong. As a result, the FBI is unlikely to regain public and congressional trust until it has a Director who understands the gravity of the mistakes and pledges never to repeat them. Having refused to admit his errors, the Director cannot be expected to implement the necessary corrective actions."

Though Rosenstein himself authorized Mueller's investigation, he testified last week that Mueller has complete independence to pursue the matter as he sees fit. Some of Trump's allies have encouraged the president to fire Mueller, but Rosenstein has insisted he is the only one with authority to do so, and that he believes Mueller — widely respected by both parties in Washington — is doing his job properly.

Immediately after Comey's ouster, Feinstein called for Rosenstein, too, to recuse himself from the Russia investigation and for a career DOJ official to handle the matter instead. But Rosenstein's appointment of Mueller appeared to calm nerves on both sides of the aisle. Democrats indicated they were comfortable with Rosenstein overseeing the probe, if only because they trusted Mueller to report any potential interference.

On Friday, though, the Democratic National Committee called for Rosenstein's recusal and urged DOJ to bypass other Trump appointees and hand the matter to a career official.

The Justice Department said on Friday that there are no current plans for recusal. "As the Deputy Attorney General has said numerous times, if there comes a point when he needs to recuse, he will. However, nothing has changed," a spokesman said in a statement.

Several White House scandal veterans told POLITICO this week that it's only a matter of time before Rosenstein recuses himself from being the official liaison to the Mueller probe. That move is necessary, they explained, because Rosenstein is likely going to be an integral part of the expanding investigation - the special counsel staff now includes 13 prosecutors plus Mueller, and it intends to keep hiring -- on the obstruction of justice case.

"He's going to be an important witness in this case potentially. He's definitely going to get interviewed," said Peter Zeidenberg, who served on the DOJ special prosecution team during the George W. Bush-era Valerie Plame Wilson CIA leak investigation and now works as a partner at Arent Fox.

Reports emerged earlier this week suggesting Mueller's probe had begun looking at the prospect of obstruction by Trump himself. Trump fired Comey on May 9 while Comey was overseeing the initial Russia investigation. Comey has since testified that Trump had asked him repeatedly to publicly announce he was not under investigation. Comey gave him private assurances that he

was not a target of the investigation at that stage. The FBI director during his appearance before the Senate Intelligence Committee said it was on Mueller to make the legal determination on whether to pursue obstruction of justice charges, and now Trump himself acknowledges he's being investigated by the special counsel.

This week, Trump surrogates have questioned Mueller's integrity leading the special counsel probe because of his long-standing friendship with Comey. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich also criticized Mueller for adding several prosecutors to his team who have donated to Democrats. On Thursday, Trump joined the chorus, tweeting the Russia probe was being "led by some very bad and conflicted people!"

The president's latest social media missive Friday appears to have turned his ire toward Rosenstein, who he nominated to the second-highest post in the Justice Department earlier this year. Though typically, the attorney general would have the authority to hire or dismiss a special counsel, Attorney General Jeff Sessions recused himself in March from any decision-making authority over the Russia probe.

Trump's Twitter attack comes a day after Rosenstein issued a cryptic statement, urging Americans not to believe news stories that cite undisclosed sources.

"Americans should exercise caution before accepting as true any stories attributed to anonymous 'officials,' particularly when they do not identify the country — let alone the branch or agency of government — with which the alleged sources supposedly are affiliated. Americans should be skeptical about anonymous allegations. The Department of Justice has a long-established policy to neither confirm nor deny such allegations," the statement read.

Politically, both Democrats and Republicans in recent days have warned Trump about the consequences if he did pull the trigger and fire the senior current and former DOJ officials who have the reins on the Russia investigation.

"I think firing Mueller could trigger an impeachment process," Chris Ruddy, CEO of the conservative publication Newsmax said earlier this week in an interview just hours before visiting senior Trump aides at the White House. "It could be very dangerous."

"It might be something from which he might not be able to recover from," added Ben-Veniste.

But others aren't so sure, especially after a presidential campaign that saw Trump survive a series of seemingly fatal missteps that in past election cycles have sunk other White House contenders. "Everyone says it would be a disaster to fire him, but is that right?" said one prominent Washington-based attorney who works with the Trump White House. "Have norms shifted so much that even a 'massacre' does not matter?"

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**GOP sirens blare over Georgia special election [Back](#)**

By Alex Isenstadt | 06/16/2017 05:10 AM EDT

The GOP is bracing for the prospect of a loss in Tuesday's Georgia's special election that could have far-reaching implications for President Donald Trump and his party's fortunes in 2018.

As grim confidential polling data circulates among GOP strategists, interviews with nearly two dozen Republican operatives and officials reveal that they are preparing for the possibility of an unnerving defeat that could spur lawmakers to distance themselves from Trump and his already-troubled legislative agenda, and potentially encourage a wave of retirements.

While no one is willing to publicly write off Handel's chances just yet — Republicans stress that she remains competitive and point to robust GOP early voting figures — several private surveys taken over the last few weeks show Republican nominee Karen Handel trending downward, with one private party poll showing 30-year-old Democrat Jon Ossoff opening up a more than five-point lead in the Republican-oriented, suburban Atlanta seat.

"If we're losing upper middle class, suburban seats in the South to a 30-year-old progressive liberal, we would be foolish not to be deeply concerned about the possibility that would exist for a tidal wave election for Democrats in 2018," said Chip Lake, a Georgia-based Republican strategist and former Capitol Hill chief of staff.

Some fear the catalytic effect a GOP loss would have on the Democratic opposition, which has been raising money and recruiting candidates at a breakneck pace since Trump's inauguration.

"If Ossoff wins, you're going to see the floodgates open, with Democrats recruiting candidates in races from governor to county commission," said Randy Evans, an influential Republican National Committeeman from Georgia.

The president shoulders some of the blame for the GOP's predicament. While Trump has tweeted repeatedly about the race and fundraised for Handel — last week, Vice President Mike Pence was dispatched to the district to appear with Handel — Handel's fade in the polls has coincided with the ratcheting up of Trump's Russia-related troubles. According to one private survey provided by a GOP group, Trump's approval rating in the district has dropped from 54 percent to 45 percent since February, a striking decline for a president who has been in office for less than five months.

Handel, whose team views Trump as something of a drag, has given him a weak embrace. On the campaign trail, the GOP nominee has insisted she isn't "an extension of the White House."

At the White House itself, chief of staff Reince Priebus, political director Bill Stepien, and chief strategist Steve Bannon have been closely monitoring the race. During the first round of balloting in April, Bannon kept close track of early voting figures, warned that the Democratic turnout machine shouldn't be underestimated, and cautioned that the possibility of an Ossoff win shouldn't be discounted.

On Capitol Hill, where GOP leaders huddled Tuesday with rank-and-file House lawmakers on the second floor of the Capitol Hill Club for a conversation about the Georgia race and the 2018 political environment, National Republican Congressional Committee Chairman Steve Stivers



outlined for the group why the party had spent so heavily in the special election, explaining that the outcome would have an outsize role in shaping the midterm election narrative. To date, the NRCC has spent over \$6 million boosting Handel.

Hoping to quell concerns, the Ohio congressman put an optimistic spin on the race. But two people in the room said Stivers also gave an unvarnished assessment of the party's chances of holding the seat, walking the lawmakers through the party's advertising strategy and describing the early vote totals.-

At one point during the meeting, Stivers made a plea for members to donate cash, and several volunteered funds on the spot. House Speaker Paul Ryan also spoke, reminding lawmakers that midterms are historically hard for parties in power during a president's first term and that they needed to prepare for a difficult election cycle.

Regardless of the outcome, Republicans appear to be taking a lesson from the contest: the president's support is diminishing in some of the key districts that will determine the House's balance of power -- places like Georgia's 6th District, which is filled with the upper-income and highly-educated suburban voters and was never especially enamored of the president in the first place.

"It defines the kind of district where Trump struggles," said Whit Ayres, a Handel pollster. "He was never particularly popular, and he hasn't gotten more so since he was inaugurated."

Ayres said that Republican voters were more energized now than in April, but argued that Trump's unpopularity in the district was the primary reason why the race was still close.

After Ossoff failed to win the crowded April primary outright — he fell just short of the 50 percent threshold necessary to win the seat without a runoff — Handel was considered the favorite in a district long held by Republicans. But Ossoff has continued his torrid fundraising pace since then, raking in an eye-popping \$23 million total, more than five times as much as Handel.

While Republicans privately lampoon Ossoff's campaign skills — deriding him as an inexperienced, talking-point driven candidate — they acknowledge his cash advantage has made him a lethal opponent.

"We're going to find out if a monkey banging cymbals together spending \$25 million can get elected," the NRCC's executive director John Rogers told a group of Capitol Hill chiefs of staff this week, said one person present for the meeting. His meaning was clear to those in attendance: Ossoff might seem like a mechanical candidate, but he had to be taken seriously.

Should Handel lose, it could set off a panic about 2018 that GOP leaders will be compelled to address to avoid setting off a wave of retirements. Some senior Republicans point to 2008 as a possible template. That year, after the party suffered a series of special election defeats, then-House Minority Leader John Boehner installed a key ally, longtime strategist Ed Brookover, at the NRCC in hopes of quieting concerns.

With the election still days away, some Republicans are already pointing fingers at Handel — a

tried-and-true Washington tactic. In the White House, some officials have privately derided her as a frequent candidate for public office who isn't the kind of fresh face necessary to win. Others are second-guessing her campaign team. During a Sunday appearance on "The Georgia Gang," a public affairs TV show, longtime party hand and conservative commentator Phil Kent criticized the campaign's decision to hold a fundraiser instead of a public rally with Pence.

Oklahoma Rep. Tom Cole, a former NRCC chairman, said he was nervous about the Georgia race but felt confident the party had done all it could. The special election, he said, was a reflection of a challenging national environment the GOP was coming to terms with.

"No one here is whistling past the political graveyard and we understand this cycle will be intense, and that it will test our hold on the majority," he said. "We may or may not hold the majority, but it won't be for lack of effort."

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## **Amazon buying Whole Foods in \$13.7 billion deal [Back](#)**

By Nancy Scola | 06/16/2017 10:03 AM EDT

Online retail giant Amazon is acquiring grocery chain Whole Foods Market in a deal worth about \$13.7 billion, the two companies [announced](#) Friday.

Amazon will pay \$42 per share in an all-cash transaction that is projected to close in the second half of 2017.

Whole Foods, a brand known for helping to take organic produce mainstream, would continue operating under its brand name, remain headquartered in Austin, Texas, and be run by CEO and co-founder John Mackey.

"Whole Foods Market has been satisfying, delighting and nourishing customers for nearly four decades — they're doing an amazing job and we want that to continue," Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos said in a statement.

Amazon has offered local food delivery via its AmazonFresh program, created in 2007, in a handful of cities, including its home base of Seattle, as well as in San Francisco and New York. Late last year the company began experimenting with [brick-and-mortar locations](#) that are free of checkout lines. Shoppers scan an app upon entering the so-called Amazon Go store, and computer vision and sensor technology detects items they place in their bags and charges their Amazon accounts.

But the purchase of Whole Foods and its 460 stores in the U.S., Canada and the U.K. gives the company access to instant infrastructure — including the expensive facilities needed for handling perishables — in scores of urban and suburban markets.

Amazon has also dabbled in drone delivery of its books and other packages; the sprawling

network of Whole Foods stores could form the basis of the sort of localized distribution network future delivery-by-drone would require.

The purchase requires signoff from U.S. regulators and Whole Foods shareholders. If it goes final, Bezos would continue expanding his reach into industries outside of e-commerce. He personally owns both The Washington Post and Blue Origin, a commercial space exploration company.

The deal would mark Amazon's largest acquisition, in terms of value, by a long shot. Its biggest deal on record was struck in 2014, when Bezos' shop put down \$970 million in cash to acquire the video-game service Twitch Interactive, according to data from [Bloomberg](#).

Initial reaction from one advocacy group active in the organic food space, Food & Water Watch, was scathing. Wenonah Hauter, Food & Water Watch's executive director, called for regulators to block the deal, arguing prices for consumers would rise following the combination of the powerhouse online retailer and one of the country's 10 largest grocery supermarket chains.

"Too few companies already exert outsized influence over our food choices. This is extreme consolidation of the food system in action, which will lead to higher prices, fewer choices for consumers, and bigger profits for billionaires like its owner, Jeff Bezos," Hauter said in a statement.

She noted that the top four grocery retailers have a hold over some 62 percent of U.S. food sales and that more than 4,000 grocery stores were combined under two owners by way of the Albertsons-Safeway and Ahold-Delhaize mergers.

News of the deal comes right after Mackey blasted activist investor Jana Partners, which [bought](#) a stake of nearly 9 percent in Whole Foods and had been pushing for a sale. Mackey told Texas Monthly, in an [article](#) this month titled "The shelf life of John Mackey," that Jana Partners was attacking his reputation in a ruthless quest to turn a profit.

"They're putting a bunch of propaganda out there, trying to destroy my reputation and the reputation of Whole Foods, because it's in their self-interest to do so," he told Texas Monthly.

Jana Partners, together with fellow activist investor Neuberger Berman, had also been pressing for an operational overhaul of Whole Foods amid declining sales. Two governance changes were put in place after the activists bought their way in, including a [shake-up last month](#) that included the hiring of a new CFO with e-commerce experience and the naming of five new independent directors to the board.

"We need to evolve," Mackey added in the interview with Texas Monthly. "We need to get better, and we're doing that. But these guys just want to sell us, because they think they can make forty or fifty percent in a short period of time."

Amazon [flirted](#) with the idea of buying Whole Foods last fall but opted not to, Bloomberg reported. But once Jana Partners got involved, it was game on.

*Jenny Hopkinson contributed to this report.*

To view online [click here](#).

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By Anthony Adragna | 06/19/2017 05:52 AM EDT

*With assistance from Annie Snider*

**KINGS OF THE HILL:** Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and Energy Secretary Rick Perry are barnstorming Capitol Hill this week, hitting multiple committees to defend the administration's requests for steep budget cuts. Expect lawmakers to be cool to the call to slash Interior's budget by \$1.1 billion, or ten percent, from last year's spending levels, and similar skepticism for the proposed 18 percent cut to DOE's non-nuclear security work. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt drew some hostile questioning from both Democrats and Republicans during a similar budget hearing last week.

**Zinke heads first** to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee at 10 a.m. Tuesday, followed by a 9:30 a.m. trip to Senate Appropriators the following day (Sen. Lisa Murkowski will chair both hearings). And then he'll get some face time with House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop on Thursday for similar treatment. Look for intense questioning on Zinke's ongoing review of dozens national monument designations that were made under the Antiquities Act, as well his plans to shuffle several senior department staff. And ME would be shocked if House Natural Resources' top Democrat Raul Grijalva didn't push for some promise from Zinke to respond to his bevy of oversight letter requests.

**Perry's turn in the hot seat** kicks off Tuesday at 1 p.m. in a visit with House Appropriators, followed by a 2:30 p.m. hearing the following day with Senate energy spending cardinals. ME expects the former Texas governor (who tweeted about everything from live music to college baseball over the weekend) to get lots of questions about funding for clean energy research programs and national laboratories, both of which are targeted for deep cuts under Trump's budget. And look for climate hawks to press Perry to justify closing the Office of International Climate and Technology within DOE.

**HITTING THE HOUSE FLOOR:** Lawmakers are expected to consider legislation on the floor this week that backers say will improve grid reliability and reduce the risks of wildfires by making it easier to remove trees and other vegetation near electric equipment on federal lands. The Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act (H.R. 1873) cleared the House Natural Resources Committee by a 24 to 14 vote in late April. Also expected to get a vote is the Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act (H.R. 1654) (more on that below.) The House Rules Committee takes up both measures Tuesday at 5 p.m.

**WELCOME TO A NEW WEEK!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and I'm only with you for part of this week, as I'm off to get married at the end of it! But in the meantime, Christopher

Pearcey was first to identify Philadelphia as the site of the First Continental Congress. For today: Who was the person who infamously asked Sen. Joseph McCarthy "Have you no sense of decency?" Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**GLANCING INTO TRUMP'S ENERGY PORTFOLIO:** President Donald Trump made between \$149,719 and \$401,000 from holdings in the energy sector, according to his latest financial [disclosure](#) covering the 2016 calendar year and the early months of 2017. Trump reported energy holdings in GE, Halliburton, Kinder Morgan, Phillips 66, NextEra Energy, Chevron, Exxon Mobil and Shell, among others. Theodor Meyer and Matthew Nussbaum have a closer look at the disclosure form [here](#).

**ON THE WATER DOCKET:** After winning a relaxing of environmental restrictions on pumping in California's water hub last year, the state's House Republicans are this week poised to move on Rep. [Tom McClintock](#)'s "Water Supply Permitting Coordination Act," which would change the way new water storage projects are permitted and put the Bureau of Reclamation in the driver's seat for approving new dams and reservoirs. The measure, which is slated to hit the House floor Thursday, passed the House Natural Resources Committee earlier this month over Democratic objections that it could short-circuit environmental review and arguments that the real challenge to new reservoirs is not permitting, but economics.

**Not to be outdone**, the Senate has its own full water agenda this week, with an Environment and Public Works Committee subpanel considering innovative financing options for addressing the country's water infrastructure woes Tuesday morning and the Energy and Natural Resources Committee holding a hearing that afternoon on federal and state partnerships aimed at restoring watersheds and other large scale restoration projects.

**WHAT'S GOING ON IN COAL COUNTRY?** James Higdon checks in on Eastern Kentucky for [POLITICO Magazine](#) and finds job losses continue in the coal industry there, but there's increased optimism that the bleeding has been staunch. There's also been surprise demand from Silicon Valley for the rare earth elements and a type of metallurgic coal needed to make silicon, the basic material for computer chips and solar panels. But the overall sense remains the federal government is not a benevolent force for the region: There's "a perception in communities like this that we're being done wrong. People around here get the feeling that the government is not being reputable with them." Pat White, the County Judge Executive for Whitley County, told James.

**KLOBUCHAR: WHERE ARE THE PICKS?** Asked on "[Fox News Sunday](#)" whether Democrats shared some of the blame for Trump's swath of unfilled federal agency positions, Minnesota Sen. [Amy Klobuchar](#) correctly pointed out the White House had yet to send over hundreds of nominees for the Senate to consider. "I'm not saying we are perfect throughout time, but I do know that all of his cabinet nominees are now in place, that they have been voted on, some with significant Democratic support," she said. And they "haven't put people up for a lot of those positions."

**TAKING STOCK OF TEXAS SHALE:** The Academy of Medicine, Engineering & Science of Texas is today releasing [a report](#) examining the environmental and community impacts of shale

production in that state. Key findings: Texas produced more oil in 2015 than all but six countries, oil and natural gas generated \$1.7 billion in property tax revenue for Texas schools, and earthquakes in the state jumped from around two a year before 2008 to between 12 and 15 since then. In addition, Texas ranks 11th in the country for at-risk species though the fact that 95 percent of state's land is privately owned limits study of land impacts, five percent of emitters account for about half all emissions and fracking accounts for less than one percent of statewide water usage. The group will hold [a webinar](#) at 11 a.m. EST today to discuss its findings.

**EPA PULLS, RESENDS COAL ASH GUIDANCE:** Last week, EPA withdrew from OMB its original draft guidance for states on setting up coal ash permitting programs, but promptly swapped in a new version, Pro's Alex Guillén reports in [Energy Regulation Watch](#). It's not yet clear why EPA had to pull its first version just three weeks after it sent the document over to the White House for regulatory reform.

**WHAT'S HOLDING BACK CLEAN ENERGY?** The Joint Economic Committee Democrats are out with [a report](#) today identifying the impediments they say are holding back the speedier deployment of clean energy technologies. Some of the holdups they highlight: "Implicit and explicit" subsidies that benefit fossil fuels and make it harder for clean energy to compete; underinvestment from the private sector in new energy sources; existing energy infrastructure that's built to accommodate fossil fuels and "inconsistent or unclear policy directions" that make it hard for investors to feel comfortable investing in new clean technologies.

**OIL SECTOR DEFENDS NAFTA:** Maintaining the current basic contours of NAFTA is crucial if the U.S. hopes to achieve energy independence, the American Petroleum Institute wrote in a [letter](#) to the U.S. Trade Representative. As Ben Lefebvre [reports](#), the group's priorities in negotiations include prohibiting tariffs, protecting intellectual property rights, ensuring mobility of labor and adding more flexible language for diluents, the light oil that Canadian oil sands producers mix into bitumen to make it easier to process and send through pipelines. "The overall functionality of the current NAFTA agreement works for the oil and natural gas industry," API said.

**HOUSE DEMS: REVERSE COURSE ON PARIS:** Nearly 90 percent of House Democrats, led by Rep. [Brad Schneider](#), introduced [a resolution](#) Friday saying that they "strongly disapprove" of Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate accord and urging him to reverse that decision.

**MARKEY TO PERRY: DON'T CLOSE CLIMATE OFFICE:** Avowed climate hawk Sen. [Ed Markey](#) sent [a letter](#) to Perry Friday urging him to reverse course on his [plans to shutter](#) the Energy Department's Office of International Climate and Technology.

**KAINE SCREENS SEA-LEVEL RISE DOCUMENTARY:** Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine today delivers opening remarks and hosts a screening of a new documentary, *Tidewater*, exploring the impacts of sea-level rise on the Hampton Roads region. It kicks off at 6 p.m. in the Congressional Meeting Room North of the Capitol Visitors Center.

**LAWMAKERS TO PRUITT: KEEP WAIVER ABILITY INTACT:** More than 75 House members urged Pruitt in a Friday [letter](#) to keep intact the ability for states like California and

others to set tougher vehicle emissions standards than federal ones. "If the administration is unwilling to support stronger fuel efficiency and emissions standards, it is more important than ever that states be allowed to continue driving innovation, consumer choice and environmental and public health improvements through strong state standards," they wrote. Pruitt told House Appropriators last week California's current waiver is "not under review." Republicans Carlos Curbelo and Mike Coffman joined dozens of Democrats in signing the letter.

**RENEWABLE CREDIT EXTENSION SIGNED IN FLORIDA:** Among the 13 bills signed into law by Florida Gov. Rick Scott Friday was one that extended a property tax break from residential to commercial for renewable energy source devices, POLITICO Florida's Bruce Ritchie reports. The bill, which implements a 2016 constitutional amendment, won the backing of environmental groups and solar panel installers even though the Florida House added some consumer protection measures.

**POWERING THE NEXT GENERATION GRID:** Eight national renewable energy groups released a vision statement today calling for correctly valuing both new and existing technologies, tax policy that protects existing credits for renewables and "expansion and modernization of the power grid." Signatories include the American Council on Renewable Energy, the American Wind Energy Association, American Biogas Council, Biomass Power Association, Energy Recovery Council, Geothermal Energy Association, National Hydropower Association and Solar Energy Industries Association.

**MOVER, SHAKER:** Jim Jones has joined Consumer Specialty Products Association as the executive vice president of strategic alliances and industry relations; he was previously the top chemicals official at EPA and played a key role in ushering through the bipartisan overhaul of the Toxic Substances Control Act.

**ENERGY GROUP ADDS BOARD MEMBERS:** Sen. Lamar Alexander and Rep. Dave Reichert are among the seven new members of the Alliance to Save Energy's Board of Directors. Also joining: Paula R. Glover, president of the American Association of Blacks in Energy; Microsoft's Bert Van Hoof; Andreas Schierenbeck, CEO of Thyssenkrupp Elevator AG; Maryrose Sylvester, president of Current; and Steve Wright, general manager of the Chelan Public Utility District.

## QUICK HITS

— 'Pi' group makes first endorsements. The Hill.

— Scott Pruitt vows to speed the nation's Superfund cleanups. Communities wonder how. Washington Post.

— Lawmakers say GOP reining in DNR scientists who rebelled on climate change. Madison.com.

— Sweden's Largest Pension Fund Sells Off ExxonMobil & TransCanada Stock. CleanTechnica.

— Patagonia's CEO Is Ready To Lead The Corporate Resistance To Donald Trump. Huffington Post.



— Qatar won't cut gas to UAE: Qatar Petroleum CEO. [Reuters](#).

## **HAPPENING THIS WEEK**

### **MONDAY**

3:30 p.m. — "[Naftogaz and the Future of Ukraine's Energy Sector](#)," The Atlantic Council, 1030 15th Street NW, 12th Floor,

### **TUESDAY**

8:30 a.m. — U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for 21st Century Energy host events w/ Scott Pruitt and Ryan Zinke, 1615 H Street, NW

10:00 a.m. — House Science, Space and Technology Committee Democrats [discussion](#) on climate change, 2360 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — "[Hearing to examine the President's budget request for the Department of the Interior for Fiscal Year 2018](#)," Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, 366 Dirksen

12:00 p.m. — "[Oil Pollution Act Update 2017](#)," Environmental Law Institute, 1730 M Street, NW, Suite 700

1:00 p.m. — Budget [hearing](#) for Department of Energy, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies, 2359 Rayburn

2:30 p.m. — "[Subcommittee oversight hearing to examine collaborative initiatives on restoring watersheds and large landscapes across boundaries through state and federal partnerships](#)," Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests and Mining, 366 Dirksen

2:30 p.m. — "[Innovative Financing and Funding: Addressing America's Crumbling Water Infrastructure](#)," Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife, 406 Dirksen

3:00 p.m. — "[Partners in Ingenuity: Inventing the Future w/ Sen. Lamar Alexander](#)," Bipartisan Policy Center with the American Energy Innovation Council, 430 Dirksen

5:45 p.m. — "[Litigation Roundtable and Wine & Cheese Reception](#)," Women's Council on Energy and the Environment, Wright & Talisman PC, 1200 G Street NW, Suite 600

### **WEDNESDAY**

8:30 a.m. — "[Day 1: The Wilson Center-Arctic Circle Forum](#)," Ronald Reagan Building, Amphitheatre, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

9:30 a.m. — Senate Appropriations Committee [hearing](#) on Interior Department budget w/ Ryan Zinke, 124 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — National Press Club Headliner Newsmaker with Former Sec. of Energy Ernest Moniz, 529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor

10:00 a.m. — "Legislative Hearing on Discussion Draft of Helium Extraction Act of 2017," House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, 1324 Longworth

10:00 a.m. — "Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technologies," House Science, Space, and Technology Committee's Environment Subcommittee, 2318 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — Continuation of the Markup of H.R. 1422, H.R. 1558, H.R. 2246, H.R. 2565, H.R. 2868, H.R. 2875, and H.R. 2874, House Financial Services Committee, 2128 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — Bloomberg New Energy Finance's New Energy Outlook 2017, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

2:30 p.m. — Hearing to examine DOE's FY2018 budget, Senate Appropriations Energy-Water Subcommittee, 138 Dirksen

3:00 p.m. — "Addressing Climate Change Through Innovation," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1779 Massachusetts Ave. NW

#### **THURSDAY**

8:30 a.m. — "Day 2: The Wilson Center-Arctic Circle Forum," Ronald Reagan Building, 6th Floor, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

9:30 a.m. — FERC meeting on policy issues related to Bulk-Power System, 888 First Street NE, Commission Meeting Room

9:30 a.m. — "Examining the Department of the Interior's Spending Priorities and the President's FY2018 Budget Proposal," House Natural Resources Committee, 1324 Longworth

10:00 a.m. — "Marine Debris: Efforts on Marine Debris in the Oceans and Great Lakes," Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard Subcommittee, 253 Russell

10:00 a.m. — "Hearing to examine the President's budget request for the Department of Energy for Fiscal Year 2018," Senate Energy and Natural Resources, 366 Dirksen

1:00 p.m. — "Statoil Energy Perspectives 2017," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

#### **FRIDAY**

8:30 a.m. — "What Works: Miami," POLITICO Magazine, Eden Roc, Pompeii Room - 4525 Collins Ave, Miami Beach, FL

12:00 p.m. — "Energy Demand Disruptions: Aspirations vs Reality," National Capital Area Chapter of the U.S. Association for Energy Economics, Chinatown Garden, 618 H St. NW

## **THAT'S ALL FOR ME!**

*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/zinke-perry-play-defense-on-budget-requests-this-week-023361>

### **Stories from POLITICO Pro**

#### **Trump seeks 10 percent cut to Interior budget [Back](#)**

By Ben Lefebvre | 05/23/2017 11:38 AM EDT

President Donald Trump's fiscal 2018 budget requests \$11.7 billion for the Interior Department, a \$1.1 billion or 10 percent decrease from the 2017 annualized CR level.

BLM would receive \$963 million for activities like managing energy development and grazing on federal lands, down 10 percent from this year. The only part of BLM's budget to increase would be for energy and minerals management.

BOEM would see its budget to offer offshore drilling and wind development leases remain flat at \$171 million, and the Office of Surface Mining budget would fall 11 percent to \$109 million.

The proposal follows up on Trump's promises to slash clean energy and climate change programs launched under the Obama administration and to unwind regulations hampering fossil fuel development such as Interior's coal leasing moratorium.

Congress is unlikely to go along with the deep cuts, however. Any final spending bill would have to secure 60 votes in the Senate to overcome a Democratic filibuster.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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#### **Few DOE programs spared cuts in full Trump budget [Back](#)**

By Darius Dixon | 05/23/2017 11:47 AM EDT

The Energy Department's [budget](#) would be cut by more than 9 percent to \$28 billion under President Donald Trump's fiscal 2018 [budget proposal](#) released today.

DOE's Fossil Energy and Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy offices would be cut by more than half under the White House proposal. The nuclear energy office would see a cut of about 30 percent.

DOE's Office of Science would be cut from \$5.4 billion to \$4.8 billion. The budget proposes to cut some programs entirely, including ARPA-E, and the controversial loan operation.

The proposal includes \$90 million to restart licensing activities for the long-stalled Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository and to initiate an interim storage program.

Trump's full budget would keep the DOE at the level the White House targeted in its "[skinny](#)" [budget](#) released in March, but Congress [provided](#) the agency with a funding increase for the rest of fiscal 2017 to put the agency's budget at \$30.8 billion.

Trump's topline DOE reduction is a relatively modest 9.1 percent compared to other federal agencies, partly because DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration would see a \$1 billion increase.

Still, many Republicans in Congress have opposed several aspects of Trump's budget and any final spending bill would need 60 votes in the Senate to overcome a Democratic filibuster.

DOE intends to release additional agency-specific budget materials later today.

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**GOP tells Pruitt he will get bigger budget than requested** [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/15/2017 02:42 PM EDT

Republican lawmakers made it clear today that EPA is not going to get the budget it asked for — it's going to get a whole lot more.

Multiple GOP members of the Appropriations committee overseeing EPA said they will not come close to enacting the administration's proposed 31 percent cut.

"I can assure you you're going to be the first EPA administrator that's come before this committee in eight years that actually gets more money than they asked for," Rep. [Tom Cole](#) (R-Okla.) told EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. "That doesn't mean you'll get as much as you've had, but you'll do better than you asked for."

Rep. [Mark Amodei](#) (R-Nev.) noted that Congress has already cut EPA's budget by more than \$2 billion since 2010. "No one's standing on the rooftops begging for dirty air and dirty water," he said in calling for no more than moderate spending reductions.

Other Republicans on the panel made sure to defend specific programs they favor.

House Appropriations Chairman [Rodney Frelinghuysen](#) (R-N.J.) told Pruitt that his state is home to more than 100 of the nation's 1,300 Superfund sites. "I think it's good to move with precaution before you take too many dramatic steps," he warned about EPA's 31 percent cut to that program.

Subcommittee chairman [Ken Calvert](#) (R-Calif.) criticized steep cuts to a popular diesel engine retrofit program and lamented the complete deletion of targeted air shed grants.

And Rep. [Dave Joyce](#) (R-Ohio) criticized the budget for killing the \$300 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Appropriators will write EPA's spending bill for next year, expected to be released later this summer.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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### **Zinke to shuffle top Interior Department career staff [Back](#)**

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/16/2017 03:15 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is shuffling dozens of senior department staff to new positions, reassigning as many as one-quarter of the top career people into new jobs.

A spokeswoman for the agency confirmed the changes were taking place, which Jason Briefel, executive director of Senior Executive Services, told POLITICO could involve as many as 50 people.

That would be "a very large number" compared to the previous shakeups that occur when new administrations take power, Briefel said, and could require some staffers to change jobs in as little as 15 days.

A former Fish and Wildlife Service member told POLITICO a move of that breadth of the staff changes would be "unprecedented," and said the shakeup was rumored to move many of the people between DOI's various agencies.

DOI defended the moves.

"Personnel moves are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the department's operations through matching senior executive skill sets with mission and operational requirements," said DOI spokeswoman Heather Swift said. "The president signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue."

She decline to give details of the planned job changes.

According to The Washington Post, which obtained a copy of one the letters sent to Interior staff on Thursday, officials who received notices include Interior's top climate policy official, Joel Clement, who directs the Office of Policy Analysis, as well as at least five senior FWS officials.

Among the Fish and Wildlife officials are the assistant director for international affairs, Bryan Arroyo; the southwest regional director, Benjamin Tuggle; and the southeast regional director, Cindy Dohner, according to the paper. BLM New Mexico state director Amy Lueders would move to FWS, while Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Weldon "Bruce" Loudermilk, acting Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Michael S. Black and acting Special Trustee for American Indians Debra L. DuMontier would all be reassigned, the paper said.

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**NYT: Staff of DOE international climate office told to pack their bags** [Back](#)

By Eric Wolff | 06/15/2017 01:48 PM EDT

The Department of Energy will shutter its Office of International Climate and Technology, its staff was told this month, [according](#) to The New York Times, which cited current and former DOE employees.

The department has been in the crosshairs since it was marked for elimination in President Donald Trump's budget request. Its workers played an essential role in planning Energy Secretary Rick Perry's visit to Beijing last week as part of the Clean Energy Ministerial.

The office is the only unit at DOE to have climate in its name.

The office last made headlines in February when a supervisor told staff not to use the term "climate change," "Paris Agreement" or "emissions reduction" in written communications, as POLITICO [reported](#) at the time.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**Trump reports assets of at least \$1.4 billion in financial disclosure** [Back](#)

By Theodoric Meyer and Matthew Nussbaum | 06/16/2017 05:20 PM EDT

The campaign and the early months of President Donald Trump's presidency have been good for Donald Trump.

The Trump International Hotel, which opened last year just blocks from the White House in a building leased from the federal government, brought in nearly \$20 million in revenue for the president, according to Trump's latest financial disclosure, [released](#) by the U.S. Office of Government Ethics on Friday.

Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort, which he visited often in the early months of his presidency, raked in \$37 million - up from \$30 million in the report Trump filed last year and about \$16 million in the report filed two years ago.

Sales of Trump's "The Art of the Deal" brought in as much as \$1 million for Trump, compared to the less than \$100,000 in royalties that Trump reported in his 2016 filing. And sales of Trump's book "Crippled America" brought in up to another \$5 million.

Trump reported assets of at least \$1.4 billion and income of at least \$596.3 million in the 2016 calendar year and the early months of 2017. He reported owing at least \$310 million to various financial institutions, including at least \$130 million to Deutsche Bank.

It's difficult to say how beneficial the presidency has been overall for Trump's sprawling

business empire. Most of the figures detailing Trump's income, assets and debt are reported in brackets, and the highest brackets do not include an upper bound. And the reports for different years don't cover exactly the same time periods.

The 98-page document, which Trump filed voluntarily, does not provide an exact picture of his net worth. Trump has claimed he is worth in "excess of \$10 billion" but Fortune put the number at less than \$4 billion late last year.

The report also doesn't reveal how much Trump paid in taxes last year, but it still provides a snapshot into his range of investments. The White House said last month that Trump would voluntarily release his financial disclosure from the 2016 calendar year.

Trump has taken steps to reduce his conflicts of interest, stepping back from the Trump Organization and turning over daily control to his adult sons, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump. However, he has maintained his financial interest, and his sons give him updates on the financial condition of the company.

Trump sold off all of his stocks, as his aides said he had, with the exception of some private funds over which he has no control — a typical practice for elected officials. Trump also apparently maintains a small investment in a private, New Jersey-based apparel company, Eco Tek 360, Inc.

Trump also collected \$84,292 in pension payments from the Screen Actors Guild.

"President Trump welcomed the opportunity to voluntarily file his personal financial disclosure form; while this filing is voluntary (as no report was due until May 2018), it has been certified by the Office of Government Ethics pursuant to its normal procedures," press secretary Sean Spicer said in a statement on Friday evening.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**POLITICO Magazine: Why this part of coal country loves solar power** [Back](#)

By James Higdon | 06/18/2017 02:05 PM EDT

WILLIAMSBURG, Kentucky—The first few months of 2017 haven't been especially kind to the coal miners of Kentucky. Eighty-eight of them lost their jobs when a single company, Mountainside Coal, laid off its entire work force.

Deb Moses was one of them. "I volunteered for the layoff because somebody had to go," she told POLITICO Magazine. "I was the one that could handle it because I didn't have a mortgage."

Whitley County, in the Appalachian foothills, was one of the hardest hit counties in a state that saw an overall loss of 216 coal jobs during the first quarter, according to the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet. In a region where coal still dominates a sagging economy, even small

fluctuations like this are parsed for signs of larger trends.

But there is a surprising amount of optimism in Appalachia these days. The recent job losses weren't nearly as painful as the relentless declines the industry has felt over the past six years, which in itself was a kind of good news. Then, six days after I spoke to Moses in Whitley County, President Trump announced that he would pull the United States out of the Paris climate accord, honoring a campaign pledge to revive the coal industry by removing the yoke of environmental regulations. The announcement, met largely with anger and frustration in America's coastal cities, was cheered in this part of Kentucky.

"Hopefully it signals the beginning of the end to the war on our local economy from federal regulations," Pat White, the County Judge Executive for Whitley County, told me by email two days after the president's announcement.

But perhaps the best reason for an out-of-work miner in Whitley County to think she'll be back underground before long has little to do with the regulations Trump has stripped away. Interestingly, it has more to do with the demands of the new economy driven by Silicon Valley.

The coal under the hills of Whitley County, like about a third of the coal in central Appalachia, is metallurgic coal, a higher grade of coal that burns hotter and cleaner than the power plant-fueling thermal coal that has been demonized by environmentalists in debates over carbon emissions and climate change. Used to forge steel and other metals, metallurgic coal will be essential for any future infrastructure project boom, and Kentucky's mountains have an estimated 35-year supply. But the seam in Whitley County is an even more valuable variety of metallurgic coal known as "blue gem." It burns even hotter with a low ash content, making it useful to produce silicon, the basic material for computer chips and solar panels.

"You need the blue gem to make the solar panels, and that's what people don't know," Moses told me, articulating a simple truth: Without Coal Valley, there's no Silicon Valley.

Here in Appalachia, the new and old economies remain linked in inextricable ways often ignored in partisan debates that cast fossil fuels and renewable energy in a zero sum battle. In early June on MSNBC, reporter Willie Geist asked EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, "It's true is it not that there are more jobs created by solar energy, by the next wave of energy in this country, than by the coal jobs that you have cited?" Pruitt responded that "all jobs matter," but he could have gone further. He could have told Geist there's a seam of coal in Whitley County that is in high demand by American industry, but 88 people lost their jobs because of the Army Corps of Engineers' permitting restrictions caused a coal company to go dark.

"One of the biggest headaches we have in the U.S. is getting permits," said Dr. Rick Honaker, chair of the Department of Mining at the University of Kentucky's College of Engineering. "If you go to Canada, you can up there and get started in two or three years, but in the U.S., it's a five to 10-year process."

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**Eastern Kentucky coal miners** were once a key Democratic Party constituency on the front



lines of the labor movement. Then, in 1980—just three years after the documentary film *Harlan County, U.S.A.* about striking coal workers won an Oscar—Hal Rogers was elected to Congress as an Appalachian Republican. Four years later, Mitch McConnell won statewide in his first race for U.S. Senate. Still, Democrats continued to hold their own in Kentucky, especially in the mountains, until the first term of the Obama administration.

In 2011, two things happened nearly simultaneously: Obama's EPA announced its mercury and air toxins standards at about the same time that the price of natural gas fell below the price of coal for the first time in history, resulting in power plants converting from coal to gas. The market for thermal coal cratered. Republicans wasted no time blaming the job losses on Obama's regulations. Though some said this was roughly the equivalent of blaming the president for the price of gasoline at the pump, the "War on Coal" became a convenient political weapon with which Republicans cudged Democrats. And when Republicans weren't beating Democrats over the head, Democrats were doing it to themselves, as evidenced by Hillary Clinton's campaign gaffe about "putting lots of coal miners out of work." In November, a region of the country that had been reliably Democratic a generation or two ago voted for Trump in overwhelming numbers.

The "War on Coal" rhetoric loses some steam when confronted with the reality that 21 gigawatts of coal-fired power plants are scheduled to be shut down over the next four years. The coal firing those plants will likely be replaced by natural gas and renewables, according to the American Public Power Association. But that hasn't made regulation bashing any less popular in this part of the country, which is why Trump's popularity remains so high. Trump, to the delight of his supporters, has followed through on several major campaign promises on coal. Even before the much-touted retreat from the Paris Accords, Trump had dumped the Stream Protection Rule and pulled the plug on Obama's Clean Power Plan.

In March, Fox News put a camera crew down a long-wall mine outside of Hazard in Perry County. Miners were back at work there and this news seemed to endorse the notion that onerous regulations really were the thing holding back the coal industry. Perry was one of the lucky counties in the region, recording a gain of 54 jobs in the first quarter. But overall, Kentucky's job numbers were down by more than 200. Only in a region as bruised by job losses as this one would that be seen as good news. But that's what it looked like to Tyler White, president of the Kentucky Coal Association, who observed that any number that wasn't a four-digit loss suggested "that maybe the bleeding has stopped."

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**Back in October** 2015, Mountainside Coal began applying for permits to mine the blue gem in Whitley County. Like all coal operations, it required permits from an array of state and federal agencies, including the Army Corps of Engineers, which claims jurisdiction over all waterways in America. The Army Corps granted a permit to Mountainside in April 2017, but Mountainside had been laying people off since July 2016.

"I can tell you that if we had gotten that permit in a timely manner, we could have mined that coal while we had a contract to sell it," Moses told me.

When I asked the Army Corps if it slow-walked coal mining permits, as many in coal country believe, a spokesman for the Corps pushed back: "If use of the term 'slow-walks' is meant to imply that we intentionally drag our feet or delay processing of applications related to coal mining proposals—that is simply not true."

Stories like this one, confirm for the people of eastern Kentucky that the federal government is not a benevolent force, says Judge White. There's "a perception in communities like this that we're being done wrong. People around here get the feeling that the government is not being reputable with them."

Regulations, big environmental ones or just the plodding bureaucracy, define the federal government in this region and will remain a fixation for the residents of coal country for the foreseeable future.

"If the regulations level out and they get that worked out, that's going open up more jobs and help with the blue gem market, and maybe extend that market," said former exploration foreman Kent Sears, who, like Deb Moses, was also laid off from Mountainside Coal in the first quarter of 2017.

As of 2012, eastern Kentucky had 5.5 billion tons of metallurgic coal remaining inside its mountains, enough for 35 years, according to a report from the University of Kentucky. That's the good news. The bad news is that only 17 percent of those reserves are greater than 42 inches thick. Anything narrower than that requires cutting out additional rock, which raises production costs.

In addition to metallurgic coal, another bright spot in the future of eastern Kentucky is a reserve of coal near Hazard called the Fire Clay seam, which yields a surprising byproduct during the coal cleaning process: large quantities of rare earth elements (REEs)—vital to the production of smart phones, tablets, electricity-generating windmills and military hardware. Experts say there's enough to meet U.S. demand for 20 years.

Currently, the world's largest reserves of rare earth elements is in China, which is keeping the price for the elements low because its REE reserves are the first step of the Chinese smart-phone supply chain. Consequently, China is keeping the costs of its REEs low, according to Dr. Rick Honaker, the chairman of the the University of Kentucky's Department of Mining.

At the Fire Clay seam near Hazard, Dr. Honaker and his team have demonstrated they can extract industrial amounts of REE's during the coal-cleaning process from the clay immediately adjacent to the coal — a substance that is normally a waste product.

"What was the environmental headache of coal could be an economic gem," Dr. Honaker told me by telephone. "We can do it today. The problem today is that China controls the market and keeps the REE prices suppressed."

So if Silicon Valley were ever interested in repatriating its smart phone supply chain, the first thing it would need is a reliable domestic supply of REE's, and according to Dr. Honaker, there's a 20-year supply in eastern Kentucky. One might think that a domestic supply of REE's would be a big deal to Silicon Valley companies like Apple that rely heavily on REE's for its smart phones

and tablets. But earlier this year, Apple pledged to work towards a zero-mining future, envisioning its primary source for its aluminum, silicon, and REE's to come from recycling instead of China or eastern Kentucky.

Apple chose not to respond to a request for comment for this story, when I asked them about the company's reliance on metallurgic coal for its computer chips and for the 50-megawatt solar array it just built in Arizona to power its data center there.

"They think about coal as being dirty or whatever, but you have certain things that are a necessity. You're going to have to get it somewhere," Kent Sears told me. "If you look at all the regulations we have, maybe we got too many. Maybe consolidate a few, or streamline them. We're not their enemy."

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**API: NAFTA critical for North American energy independence** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/16/2017 05:51 PM EDT

The American Petroleum Institute is warning the Trump administration that if it wants North American energy independence, it should not make a mess of NAFTA.

"The overall functionality of the current NAFTA agreement works for the oil and natural gas industry," the trade association wrote this week in a [letter](#) to the U.S. Trade Representative. "API and its industry members therefore wish to ensure that as NAFTA is modernized, the provisions of the current agreement remain in place in a new NAFTA."

USTR asked for comments on issues that could play into the development of negotiations for a modernization of NAFTA.

API outlined its priorities for any NAFTA negotiations, including no tariffs, intellectual property rights protection, mobility of labor and more flexible language when it comes to diluents, the light oil that Canadian oil sands producers mix into bitumen to make it easier to process and send through pipelines.

As long as the free energy trade continues — and is expanded to Mexico, which wasn't a party to NAFTA's original energy provisions — North America's energy production will continue to grow faster than demand, API writes in its letter.

"This allows supply to overtake demand, offering North America the opportunity to be self-sufficient, provided open trade flows — especially between the U.S. and Canada," API's June 12 letter states. "Taken together, the U.S., Canada and Mexico are on the cusp of North American self-sufficiency."

**What's Next:** API asked to testify at a June 27 public hearing on NAFTA.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**Pruitt: EPA not reviewing California car emissions waiver** [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 06/15/2017 12:30 PM EDT

EPA is not reviewing a key waiver that allows California to set stricter emissions limits for cars than the federal government, EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt said today.

"Currently the waiver is not under review ... by EPA," Pruitt said at an appropriations hearing.

"It's important we recognize the role of states in achieving good air quality standards," Pruitt added, noting California's early role in environmental regulation.

EPA's decision to re-open a review of auto standards for model year 2022-2025 cars also raised concerns that EPA would consider revoking the California waiver. The Clean Air Act allows EPA to give waivers to California on air quality issues because of the state's historic and chronic pollution problems.

The state and environmentalists argued that the law does not allow EPA to revoke such waivers once granted, and California officials said they would fight the Trump administration if it attempted to revoke it.

The waiver in question was granted by the Obama administration in 2009. EPA and the Transportation Department later set the first greenhouse gas emissions standards for cars, but California said that any cars complying with the federal standard would also be deemed to have met the state's standards so as to avoid a patchwork of regulations.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** EPA is continuing its review of the nationwide emissions rules for model year 2022-2025 vehicles.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**Subject:** Morning Energy: Zinke to get grilled over personnel moves — White House plans upcoming Energy Week — Groups huddle over what's next in Dakota Access case  
**Received:** 2017-06-21T05:48:38-04:00

By Anthony Adragna | 06/21/2017 05:46 AM EDT

*With help from Alex Guillén, Ben Lefebvre, Annie Snider and Darius Dixon*

**BUDGET DEFENSE, PART 2:** Look for Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to get interrogated by Senate Democrats today on an Appropriations subpanel about his plans to reorganize senior career officials within his agency. "I'm very worried about the idea that you're moving people who have real serious expertise in an area to an area that they may not know anything about," Sen. [Tom Udall](#), top Democrat overseeing Interior spending, told ME. "It looks like an attempt to make the agency so it doesn't work very well or [so] that the powers that be exercise their will more easily on the agency." Zinke [plans to shift](#) as many as 50 senior career staff to new roles and suggested in [an agency memo](#) that 1,000 positions at BLM could be eliminated by the end of the year.

**More of what's on Udall's** mind was in two letters he sent Monday. [One](#), authored with Senate Energy Ranking Member [Maria Cantwell](#), argued Zinke had not properly followed administrative law in suspending key parts of a BLM rule aimed at curbing methane waste from oil and gas operations on public lands. "Nowhere in the Federal Register notice last week did the Department make a finding that industry groups and States are likely to win their lawsuits, suffer irreparable harm if deadlines are not postponed, find the balance of equities tipped in their favor, and that suspending the deadlines is in the public interest," they wrote. "The suspension of parts of the Methane Waste and Prevention Rule seems particularly brazen given that on May 10 the Senate rejected a Congressional Review Act resolution to repeal the rule."

**The other letter from Udall**, as well as New Mexico Sen. [Martin Heinrich](#) and Reps. [Ben Ray Lujan](#) and [Michelle Lujan Grisham](#), urged Zinke not to alter any New Mexican national monuments designated under the Antiquities Act. "Rescinding or shrinking to New Mexico's national monuments will cause irrevocable harm to our treasured places, would jeopardize the objects and special values that are protected through the Antiquities Act, and impact positive economic growth in local communities," they wrote. ME expects Udall to raise these issues directly at the [hearing](#) today, which kicks off at 9:30 a.m. in Dirksen 124.

**PERRY'S HILL APPEARANCE IN QUESTION?** Energy Secretary Rick Perry is supposed to make his second Capitol Hill appearance in two days — this time before a Senate Appropriations subpanel — to defend his agency's budget request at 2:30 p.m. today, but that will depend on whether Democrats continue to block committees from meeting after the Senate has been in session for two hours like they did Tuesday. Assuming the hearing takes place, look for top Senate energy spending guru [Lamar Alexander](#) to defend the need for robust energy research funding: "Governing is about setting priorities, and the federal debt is not the result of

Congress overspending on science and energy research each year," Alexander will say.

**ICYMI**, Perry told House Appropriators he wasn't trying "to stir something up," but did precisely that when he suggested a former bomb testing site in Nevada might be a site for a temporary waste facility. As Pro's Darius Dixon reports, that comment drew a swift rebuke from Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval as an "ill-conceived, irresponsible, and likely illegal" idea. Even energy spending cardinal Rep. Mike Simpson told reporters following the hearing it was the first time he'd heard the suggestion.

Perry told the subcommittee there was a "moral and national security obligation" to build nuclear waste storage facilities and said the U.S. could "no longer kick the can down the road." He added DOE would resurrect the office that ran the Yucca Mountain program before being dismantled under the Obama administration. And he said the agency did not plan to close any of its 17 national labs, though he didn't directly address concerns about potential staffing cuts.

**WELCOME TO WEDNESDAY!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna and let me start with a quick PSA: Send your tips, gossip and leads to Eric Wolff ([ewolff@politico.com](mailto:ewolff@politico.com)) and Ben Lefebvre ([blefebvre@politico.com](mailto:blefebvre@politico.com)) beginning Thursday while I'm off trading nuptials. I'll be back at the helm by mid-week, next week. In the meantime, FERC's John Peschke was first to identify Fred Thompson as the minority counsel on the Senate Watergate Committee turned senator. For today: Who was chair of the House Judiciary Committee during the Watergate process? As always, find me at [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**WHAT WORKS - LIVE IN MIAMI BEACH** - Join POLITICO in Miami Beach for a series of one-on-one interviews with mayors from across the country to hear how they are fostering innovation, promoting sustainable cities and implementing change in their regions. *Friday, June 23rd — Doors at 8:30am — Eden Roc — Pompeii Room (4525 Collins Ave., Miami Beach, FL)*  
**RSVP: [here](#).**

**NUCLEAR BILL CLEARS HOUSE:** Legislation aimed at rewriting a tax credit for nuclear power projects cleared the House by voice vote Tuesday night, Pro's Darius Dixon reports. The bipartisan bill (H.R. 1551), from Reps. Tom Rice and Earl Blumenauer, would open the credits up to projects that power up after 2020 and may offer a lifeline to four new reactors in South Carolina and Georgia. Senate aides have said the measure is unlikely to move as standalone legislation but more likely as part of comprehensive tax reform.

**ATTRACTIONS YET TO COME:** The White House plans to designate next week as Energy Week, administration and industry sources tell ME. The Trump administration has been promoting its vision of American "energy dominance," calling for more oil and gas drilling on federal lands and waters and greater exports of natural gas to countries like China. The White House pulled together an "infrastructure week" earlier this month as well as this week's "technology week," which included roundtables between industry representatives and high-level administration officials.

The White House hasn't officially announced Energy Week, and its plans are still at an early stage. Three energy industry sources said the White House is trying to coordinate a meeting of

energy CEOs next week, but said the exact scheduling still seemed up in the air. The timing would also coincide with the expected Monday release of the Energy Department's review of policies hurting baseload power on the electric grid.

**STATUS CHECK:** Litigants in the Dakota Access pipeline lawsuit are back in court today for the first time since last a federal judge last week ruled the government's environmental review of the project was inadequate. They'll hold a status check today at 2:30 p.m. about next steps in the case, including whether the pipeline should be shut off as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers addresses those deficiencies in the environmental review. Protesters will rally outside the court at 2 p.m. in support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe's efforts to fight the project.

**That came after** U.S. District Judge James Boasberg denied a bid from the plaintiffs to add Trump as a defendant in the case, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. He did allow the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Sioux to add 13 new plaintiffs to their case but ordered them to remove Trump from the complaint.

**STATES, GREENS FIGHT METHANE STAY:** Thirteen states, along with D.C. and Chicago, have gotten involved to try and reinstate a methane rule for new oil and gas wells. EPA's stay "concretely and negatively affects" the states' interest in controlling methane leaks, protecting public health and combating climate change, they argued in a Thursday filing. Several of the states, including New Mexico and Pennsylvania, noted they are home to many of the wells affected, while others complained that the stay hurts their air quality and climate change efforts. Eleven other states have already gotten involved to defend EPA's stay — and not to be left out, North Dakota and Texas indicated they plan to join that side in a "friend of the court" brief. That comes as environmental groups argued in a court filing Tuesday EPA has no right to favor oil and gas companies over the people who live near their wells and asked a federal court to reinstate the rule, Pro's Alex Guillén reports.

**MERGER MULLED:** Zinke still might recombine the agency that oversees offshore oil and gas leasing with the offshore safety and environmental watchdog less than a decade after former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar split them in 2010, Pro's Esther Whieldon and Ben Lefebvre report. "We're considering that," Zinke told POLITICO of the potential merger after speaking at a Chamber of Commerce event in Washington. "But the core of the reorganization is how to get the different bureaus to work together in a joint environment." He said to expect "the first blush" of his major plans to reorganize the agency within the next two months.

**EPA 'COMPLETELY WIPES' SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL:** Only 11 of 49 subcommittee members on EPA's Board of Scientific Counselors will remain by September after the agency suspended its meetings for the rest of the year, Pro's Annie Snider and Eric Wolff report. The cancellations, announced in a Monday by Acting Administrator for the Office of Research and Development Robert Kavlock in an email to BOSC members, come as the agency considers whether to replace most of the members of the board. "It completely wipes out BOSC," committee Chair Deborah Swackhamer told POLITICO.

**The agency has said** it wants to hear more input from people who understand how regulations affect the economy and says it has encouraged those with expiring terms to reapply. "We are



taking an inclusive approach to filling future BOSC appointments and welcome all applicants from all relevant scientific and technical fields," EPA spokeswoman Amy Graham said Tuesday.

**I'M ALREADY DEAD!** Federal scientists are predicting this summer's Gulf of Mexico dead zone is going to be a whopper - sucking the oxygen from a New Jersey-sized swath of the waterway. At 8,185 square miles, the life-smothering dead zone would be the third largest on record since monitoring began 32 years ago. Researchers attribute the extra-big zone to higher-than average amounts of nutrients washing off farm fields and suburban lawns in the massive watershed. The USGS estimates that the equivalent of 2,800 train cars of fertilizer flowed down the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers and into the Gulf in May, alone.

**HE'S BAAAAACK:** Former Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz plans to make a few headlines today by kicking off the creation of the Energy Futures Initiative at the National Press Club. The group purports to be a nonpartisan think tank focused on decarbonizing the economy and create jobs, according to information on the NPC website. "Moniz plans to use EFI to mobilize stakeholders in government, industry, labor and NGOs in creating a clean energy future." The event starts at 10 a.m.

**Moniz seems to like groups with "initiative" in the title.** Earlier this month, he officially became CEO and co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

**TAKING STOCK OF OIL RISKS:** A [report](#) out today from Carbon Tracker and Principles for Responsible Investment says that five of the world's six largest listed oil companies may misallocate up to 30 percent of their potential spending on projects that aren't needed in a world dedicated to limiting its temperature increases to two degrees Celsius. "Investors in oil and gas companies have been in the dark about their exposure to climate risk, but they will now be able to confront companies with precise information and ask hard questions about how they intend to deal with potentially stranded assets," Nathan Fabian with PRI said in a statement.

**REPORT OFFERS ROSY VIEW ON AUTO STANDARDS:** A new [report](#) from the nonprofit International Council on Clean Transportation says EPA's 2025 auto emissions standards provide benefits totaling more than three times the cost and can be recouped in as few as three years, even with low fuel prices. Based on ICCT's March report that [said](#) compliance costs for the standards could be as much as 40 percent below EPA's 2012 projections, the group concludes new cars' fuel savings would go as high as \$2,600 over a vehicle's lifetime, while trucks could save up to \$4,000, all significantly higher than the estimates costs.

**BANKS STILL DIG FOSSIL FUELS:** The Rainforest Action Network, BankTrack, Sierra Club and Oil Change International and a host of other organizations are out with a [report](#) today finding major banks poured \$87 billion into fossil fuels projects in 2016. That's better than recent years, but still incompatible with limiting temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the groups argue.

**MORE PUSH ZINKE AGAINST ARCTIC DRILLING:** Seventeen green groups, including the Alaska Wilderness League, Earthjustice and Wilderness Society, wrote Zinke Monday urging [him to reverse course](#) on potentially opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling. "The Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge is no place for oil and gas activities,

which are prohibited by law," they wrote. "The Coastal Plain should be permanently protected as Wilderness."

**RAISE UM' UP:** The Department of Interior could do more with more, the GAO says. Raising royalty rates on energy production on federal lands would likely bring more money into federal coffers without cutting much into demand for lease sales, according to GAO's [new report](#). Raising royalties to 18.75 percent from the current 12.5 percent would result in a "negligible" loss in lease demand over 10 years while increasing net federal revenue by \$200 million over the same period.

**GRIJALVA PUSHES FOR NOAA BUDGET HEARING:** House Natural Resources Ranking Member Raul Grijalva sent Chairman Rob Bishop [a letter](#) Tuesday requesting Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross testify on the Trump administration's budget request for NOAA. Commerce overall was hit with a 16 percent budget cut, including multiple NOAA programs, as part of the president's budget request.

**FLYING IN:** The Nature Conservancy expects to hold approximately 250 congressional meetings today as part of its annual advocacy day. They'll be pushing for strong funding for conservation and science programs, as well as support for a "clean, more reliable and low-carbon energy future."

**More than 200 members** of the National Propane Gas Association are hitting the Hill today to press members on infrastructure, tax reform and delaying the implementation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's new crane rule (h/t POLITICO Influence).

**MOVER, SHAKER:** Michael LaRosa starts on July 10 as comms director for Democrats on the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources under ranking member Sen. [Maria Cantwell](#). He has spent the last six plus years as a producer for MSNBC's "Hardball" with Chris Matthews. (h/t POLITICO Playbook).

**Alex Mistri** has joined Hess as vice president for government and external affairs; he was previously a managing director for the Glover Park Group.

## QUICK HITS

- Inside the Environmental Protection Agency: Paranoia and Stifled Work. [Pacific Standard](#).
- Fisticuffs Over the Route to a Clean-Energy Future. [New York Times](#).
- Oil Bears Are Back as Prices Fall and Driller Shares Take a Hit. [Bloomberg](#).
- Too Hot to Fly? Climate Change May Take a Toll on Air Travel. [New York Times](#).
- Australia warned it has radically underestimated climate change security threat. [The Guardian](#).
- Qatar can weather boycott, foreign investors won't leave: Qatar Petroleum CEO. [Reuters](#).

## HAPPENING TODAY

8:30 a.m. — "[Day 1: The Wilson Center-Arctic Circle Forum](#)," Ronald Reagan Building, Amphitheatre, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

9:30 a.m. — Senate Appropriations Committee [hearing](#) on Interior Department budget w/ Ryan Zinke, 124 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — National Press Club Headliner [Newsmaker](#) with former Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz, 529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor

10:00 a.m. — "[Legislative Hearing on Discussion Draft of Helium Extraction Act of 2017](#)," House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, 1324 Longworth

10:00 a.m. — "[Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technologies](#)," House Science, Space, and Technology Committee's Environment Subcommittee, 2318 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — Continuation of the [Markup](#) of H.R. 1422, H.R. 1558, H.R. 2246, H.R. 2565, H.R. 2868, H.R. 2875, and H.R. 2874, House Financial Services Committee, 2128 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — Bloomberg New Energy Finance's [New Energy Outlook 2017](#), Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

2:30 p.m. — [Hearing](#) to examine DOE's FY2018 budget, Senate Appropriations Energy-Water Subcommittee, 138 Dirksen

3:00 p.m. — "[Addressing Climate Change Through Innovation](#)," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1779 Massachusetts Ave. NW

## **THAT'S ALL FOR ME!**

*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/06/zinke-to-get-grilled-over-personnel-moves-023406>

## **Stories from POLITICO Pro**

### **Zinke to shuffle top Interior Department career staff [Back](#)**

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/16/2017 03:15 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is shuffling dozens of senior department staff to new positions, reassigning as many as one-quarter of the top career people into new jobs.

A spokeswoman for the agency confirmed the changes were taking place, which Jason Briefel, executive director of Senior Executive Services, told POLITICO could involve as many as 50 people.

That would be "a very large number" compared to the previous shakeups that occur when new administrations take power, Briefel said, and could require some staffers to change jobs in as little as 15 days.

A former Fish and Wildlife Service member told POLITICO a move of that breadth of the staff changes would be "unprecedented," and said the shakeup was rumored to move many of the people between DOI's various agencies.

DOI defended the moves.

"Personnel moves are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the department's operations through matching senior executive skill sets with mission and operational requirements," said DOI spokeswoman Heather Swift said. "The president signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue."

She decline to give details of the planned job changes.

According to The Washington Post, which obtained a copy of one the letters sent to Interior staff on Thursday, officials who received notices include Interior's top climate policy official, Joel Clement, who directs the Office of Policy Analysis, as well as at least five senior FWS officials.

Among the Fish and Wildlife officials are the assistant director for international affairs, Bryan Arroyo; the southwest regional director, Benjamin Tuggle; and the southeast regional director, Cindy Dohner, according to the paper. BLM New Mexico state director Amy Lueders would move to FWS, while Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Weldon "Bruce" Loudermilk, acting Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Michael S. Black and acting Special Trustee for American Indians Debra L. DuMontier would all be reassigned, the paper said.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**Interior could cut BLM staff by end of this year** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/20/2017 02:12 PM EDT

The Interior Department has told the Bureau of Land Management to prepare for staff cuts of 1,000 positions as soon as the end of this year.

Those cuts would be in line with the White House [budget](#) proposal released in May, although lawmakers have already said they did not intend to follow that guidance.

In a [memo](#) to agency employees, acting BLM Director Michael Nedd conceded that although the White House budget cuts for the agency have not been approved, staff should prepare for the reductions.

"We remain hopeful that the BLM can handle reducing the size of our workforce through normal attrition, retirements, and smart, selective hiring with an emphasis on trying to fill our critical vacancies from within our current workforce," Nedd said in the email. "To accelerate attrition, the Department may also seek authority from the Office of Personnel Management to offer early retirement and voluntary separation incentives later this year."

Neither BLM nor OPM would comment on the plans.

If implemented, the cut would eliminate 10 percent of BLM's staff. But the agency is already operating below full staffing, according to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, a nonprofit group representing state and federal workers.

"BLM is ridiculously thinly staffed," PEER Executive Director Jeff Ruch told POLITICO. "They haven't had 10,000 employees for three years. They've already shrunk 10 percent since 2010."

Meanwhile, Congress has already said it would allot more money to Interior than the White House requested.

"I don't expect many of [the cuts] to become a reality, especially those that target popular programs," Sen. [Lisa Murkowski](#) (R-Alaska) told Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke during a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee budget hearing this morning.

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**Perry: Moving nuclear waste is a 'moral' obligation** [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/20/2017 02:51 PM EDT

Energy Secretary Rick Perry told lawmakers this afternoon that building nuclear waste collection sites is a "moral and national security obligation" for the nation.

"We can no longer kick the can down the road," he said.

The former Texas governor also indicated that DOE is reconstituting its Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, which ran the Yucca Mountain program and was dismantled under the Obama administration, while the Yucca project moves through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing process.

"This is a dual track [effort]," Perry told the energy and water subpanel of the House Appropriations Committee. "We need to be doing what we're doing — stand up the office, move towards having an orderly transition back to following the law — while the NRC is following their licensing." Those plans were previously [reported](#) by POLITICO.

When pressed further about how DOE plans to rebuild its nuclear waste office while waiting for fiscal 2018,

Perry acknowledged that DOE has some holdover funds to begin rebuilding nuclear waste office while it awaits new funding in the 2018 budget. He also said that doing so would "clearly send the message that that is the direction."

President Donald Trump's budget proposal includes \$120 million to restart licensing activities for Yucca and an interim storage program.

While saying that he didn't want "to stir something up," Perry suggested that the Nevada test site could also be another option for a temporary waste facility along with sites in New Mexico and Texas.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The House Appropriations Committee has not yet scheduled the release of their energy and water spending bill. Lawmakers are hoping to get some of the 12 spending bills on the floor in July.

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**Nevada governor slams Perry suggestion to store nuclear waste in state** [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/20/2017 05:11 PM EDT

Energy Secretary Rick Perry drew a swift rebuke from Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval today after floating the idea of storing nuclear waste at a former bomb testing site in the state.

Perry told a House Appropriations subcommittee today that the Nevada National Security Site could serve as an interim waste site while the Energy Department finishes evaluating plans for a permanent repository at nearby Yucca Mountain.

"Today's comments ... come as a complete blindside and I view this as a total disregard and failure to honor the historical process," Sandoval said in a statement. The Republican governor, a friend of Perry, added the idea was "ill-conceived, irresponsible, and likely illegal."

Sandoval also said he'd asked Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt to review the idea of storing waste at the site and "identify legal avenues to stop it."

He added: "This is further than even the most fervent pro-Yucca advocates have gone and like Yucca Mountain, this idea is a non-starter."

Perry told members of the energy and water spending panel: "I'm not wanting to stir something up here just for the sake of stirring something up, but if we're truly looking for the proper places to interimly store some waste, that test site has the potential to do that as well."

Perry's suggestion was also new to energy spending cardinal Rep. [Mike Simpson](#).

"It was actually the first time I'd heard that," the Idaho Republican told reporters after the hearing. "It probably raises some eyebrows [in Nevada] about 'Are you going to put everything here?'"

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Perry told appropriators that DOE was already making efforts to reconstitute its nuclear waste office before fiscal 2018 funds are approved, but he hasn't given a clear timeline for any announcements.

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**Perry: DOE does not plan to shutter national labs** [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/20/2017 04:02 PM EDT

Energy Secretary Rick Perry said today that he does not plan to close any of its 17 national labs, but he steered around concerns about potential staffing cuts at the Energy Department.

"There's not any of these labs that are going to be shut down, obviously," Perry told the energy and water panel of the House Appropriations Committee. "These labs are going to be continuing to be the future of this country from the standpoint of innovation and technology."

Republican Rep. [Dan Newhouse](#) estimated that President Donald Trump's fiscal 2018 budget proposal would cut about \$200 million from DOE's Pacific Northwest National Lab in his Washington district.

"Let me tell you what that means in human terms," Newhouse said. "That would be a loss of a thousand jobs." He also asked Perry to square how Trump administration's proposal to make deep cuts in DOE science and technology programs doesn't hurt U.S. leadership in research.

Perry pushed back by saying that translating spending cuts directly into program changes at DOE was a "cold" and "sterile" interpretation.

"It doesn't take into account our being able to manage, our being able to use year-end extended balances," Perry said.

But while Perry insisted that DOE wouldn't scale down its research mission, he didn't address Newhouse's concern about staffing levels directly.

"I am comfortable that we will manage these labs in a way that continues to keep the employment levels at the levels to deliver the innovation and the technology this country's going to need," Perry said.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Perry is scheduled to testify before the energy and water subpanel of the Senate Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, although that session may have to be canceled if Democrats continue to [block](#) afternoon hearings as they did today.

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**House easily approves nuclear tax extension** [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 06/20/2017 05:28 PM EDT

The House passed legislation tonight aimed at rewriting a tax credit for nuclear power projects that may decide the fate of four reactors in South Carolina and Georgia.

The bipartisan bill, H.R. 1551, from Reps. [Tom Rice](#) and [Earl Blumenauer](#) was passed on a voice vote and would open the credits up to projects that power up after 2020. The bill was approved on by the House Ways and Means Committee last week.

The credits — worth billions of dollars to the companies building Summer and Vogtle nuclear expansions — currently require that new reactors be in service by the end of 2020 to qualify. But that timeline became essentially impossible for the SCANA and Georgia Power following the bankruptcy of their contractor, Westinghouse, earlier this year.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Sen. [Tim Scott](#) has introduced the Senate version of the legislation, S. 666, but Senate aides have said that the chamber is likely to move the measure as part of comprehensive tax reform rather than as a standalone bill.

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### **Judge orders DAPL plaintiffs to drop Trump as defendant** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/20/2017 04:26 PM EDT

A federal court judge today blocked a bid by plaintiffs in a Dakota Access pipeline lawsuit from naming President Donald Trump as a defendant.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg's June 19 motion allows the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Sioux to add 13 new plaintiffs to their case but ordered them to remove Trump from their complaint. The new plaintiffs had been pursuing a parallel case against DAPL that had named Trump as a defendant and alleged that his January 24 Presidential Memorandum ordering the Army Corps of Engineers to expedite the DAPL review was "without legal authority."

Boasberg dismissed that claim in the case that has already gone on nearly a year. In March, the judge rejected an injunction the tribes requested to halt DAPL's completion, and oil has already started flowing through the line that connects North Dakota oil fields to storage facilities in Illinois.

"They agree to dismiss all claims asserted in their Proposed Complaint against President Donald Trump, such that their Complaint shall be coterminous with the Complaint of the current Plaintiffs in the case," the tribes said in response to the judge's order.

A White House spokeswoman did not immediately comment.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Lawyers in the case will hold a conference on June 21.

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### **Greens pan EPA defense of stay on methane rule** [Back](#)



By Alex Guillén | 06/20/2017 03:43 PM EDT

Environmental groups today asked a federal court to reinstate EPA's methane rule for new oil and gas wells, arguing the agency has no right to favor oil and gas companies over the people who live near their wells.

EPA put the rule on hold for 90 days while it reconsiders several key provisions, a decision that would save millions of dollars in compliance costs. But the agency said that decision would not create a public health emergency because leaving the rule in place would prevent just 0.046 percent of annual industry emissions.

Environmental groups said that EPA's justification violated the Clean Air Act by ignoring the residents who live downwind from drilling operations, especially children, people with asthma and other groups most vulnerable to air pollution.

"It is irrelevant because it does not reduce the burden felt by Petitioners' members who live near sources whose emissions would be abated but for the unlawful stay, especially those in nonattainment areas where *any* additional VOC emissions may increase local ozone concentrations," the groups wrote in their brief today. "And it is disingenuous because those massive emissions are the result of EPA's own failure to regulate existing oil and gas wells."

The green groups also panned EPA's arguments that the industry would face millions of dollars' worth of compliance if the stay were lifted when "these same wells produce billions of dollars of revenue annually."

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals will decide whether to grant environmentalists' emergency request to lift EPA's stay of the methane rule. There is no specific deadline to do so, but the court has indicated it will consider the request on an expedited timetable.

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**Zinke still considering merging offshore oil leasing, safety agencies** [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon and Ben Lefebvre | 06/20/2017 06:09 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke confirmed Tuesday he is still mulling recombining the agency that oversees offshore oil and gas leasing with the offshore safety and environmental watchdog.

The possible integration of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement could bring the two agencies back together less than a decade after former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar used a secretarial order to split them in 2010. The move took more than a year and millions of dollars to achieve.

"We're considering that," Zinke told POLITICO of the potential merger after speaking at a Chamber of Commerce event in Washington. "But the core of the reorganization is how to get

the different bureaus to work together in a joint environment."

Zinke expects to unveil "the first blush" of his department-wide reorganization plans "in the next 60 days or so," he said in his speech.

Zinke has yet to lay out the benefits that merging the BSEE and BOEM would bring. But critics have called a possible merger a step back to the days when the government's offshore safety regulators were seen as being too close to the companies bidding to drill for oil and gas in federal waters.

"The offshore drilling bureau charged with leasing as much federal land as possible, as quickly as possible, shouldn't merge with the bureau responsible for ensuring safe drilling," Sen. [Ed Markey](#) (D-Mass.) said in an emailed statement.

Following Zinke's announcement last month, acting BOEM Director Walter Cruickshank said in an [email](#) to staff that there was little additional information to share with them except that Zinke expected to mull the merger over the summer.

"At this time, we don't have more details on what the Secretary is considering, but I will make information available to you when I have it," Cruickshank said in a note obtained by POLITICO under the Freedom of Information Act.

A merger of the two agencies may be one reason Zinke picked Scott Angelle to lead BSEE in late May, industry lobbyists said. Angelle oversaw Louisiana's oil and gas leasing and drilling operations in his role at the state's Office of Mineral Resources before coming to the Interior Department, which would align more closely with BOEM's role than the more safety-orientated BSEE that he now leads.

Interior created BSEE and BOEM in 2010 in the wake of the Deepwater Horizon explosion in the Gulf of Mexico, when their operations had been under the Minerals Management Service umbrella. A series of scandals at MMS also helped convince Interior officials at the time that the agency "could not keep pace with the challenges of overseeing industry operating in U.S. waters."

BSEE's 881 employees conduct more than 21,000 inspections per year, checking on nearly 2,400 offshore oil and gas drilling and production facilities, according to Interior budget documents. BOEM, for its part, oversees more than 3,000 active oil and gas leases across more than 16 million acres of federal waters.

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**EPA suspends science committee's work, mulls replacing most members** [Back](#)

By Annie Snider and Eric Wolff | 06/20/2017 03:27 PM EDT

EPA is suspending meetings of a key scientific advisory committee for the rest of this year while

the agency considers whether to replace most of its members.

The agency told members of the Board of Scientific Counselors that they would have to reapply for their seat if their first term expires this August or next March, rather than being automatically reappointed for a second three-year term as has traditionally been the case. Acting Administrator for the Office of Research and Development Robert Kavlock's [email](#) to BOSC members on Monday announcing the change follows a previous [decision](#) not to automatically re-up members whose term ended in April of this year.

"It completely wipes out BOSC," committee Chair Deborah Swackhamer told POLITICO. She pointed out that the committee was about to begin a major review of the agency's research programs as it plans for the next five years' worth of work.

The new round of notices means only 11 of 49 subcommittee members will remain after August, Swackhamer said. The board's [executive committee](#), which typically has around 20 members, will be down to just three, she said. EPA said they will be allowed to submit new applications.

"At the very least, this slows down BOSC's activity by nearly a year," Swackhamer said. "It also bodes poorly for other committees at EPA — one-third of the flagship Science Advisory Board is due to complete their first term in September."

The agency has [previously said](#) that Administrator Scott Pruitt wants to hear more input from those who understand how regulations affect the economy.

"EPA is grateful for the service of all BOSC members, past and present, and has encouraged those with expiring terms to reapply," EPA spokeswoman Amy Graham said Tuesday. "We are taking an inclusive approach to filling future BOSC appointments and welcome all applicants from all relevant scientific and technical fields."

Kavlock's email made clear that anyone interested in applying for a second term had to submit their nomination by a June 30 deadline laid out in the Federal Register.

"Because of the need to reconstitute the BOSC, we are canceling all subcommittee meetings initially planned for late summer and fall," Kavlock wrote. He said EPA's goal was for the committee and subcommittees to "resume their work in 2018."

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By Kelsey Tamborrino | 06/21/2017 04:43 PM EDT

*With help from Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon*

**INTERIOR METHANE REWRITE COULD TAKE YEARS:** Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke told a Senate Appropriations panel hearing today that it could take years to rewrite the Obama-era rule to curb methane emissions from oil and gas wells on federal property, and he cited the likelihood of legal challenges as the culprit. Republicans in the Senate failed in their effort last month to repeal the rule via a Congressional Review Act, prompting Interior to step in, Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). "I imagine we'll be in court over it," Zinke said of the process. "It should take six months, but it will probably take a couple of years." DOI gave its official notification last week that it would rewrite the rule.

**ZINKE SHUFFLES ON STAFF:** Zinke declined to give details on the extent of the shakeup among members of the department's Senior Executive Service who [received letters](#) asking them to move to jobs in different bureaus, saying he doesn't yet know how many executives will accept their new assignments, Ben [reports](#). New Mexico Sen. [Tom Udall](#) pressed Zinke, expressing concern about the staff shuffle, and requested a list of the employees being told to move by the end of the week — but Zinke objected. "I can't give a list because I don't know who's going to go — they were given a choice. There's a privacy issue until they make that choice," Zinke replied.

**Take it or leave Int:** The Interior secretary told reporters after the hearing that the executives who do not accept new postings will likely be asked to leave the department. "They can either take the move or resign," Zinke said. The nearly 50 department SES employees targeted for the shuffle could negotiate to take a position other than the one offered, but should be prepared to move, [Zinke added](#).

**Welcome to Afternoon Energy.** Happy Summer Solstice! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino. Send your thoughts, news and tips to [ktamborrino@politico.com](mailto:ktamborrino@politico.com), [mdaily@politico.com](mailto:mdaily@politico.com) and [njuliano@politico.com](mailto:njuliano@politico.com), and keep up with us on Twitter at [@kelseytam](https://twitter.com/kelseytam), [@dailym1](https://twitter.com/dailym1), [@nickjuliano](https://twitter.com/nickjuliano), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**INTERIOR OUTLINES REFORM PLANS:** The Interior Department has laid out its regulatory review plans under President Donald Trump, which largely encompass rethinking oil and gas regulations. In a Federal Register [notice](#) slated for Thursday, Interior details, among other steps, that it intends to use more advanced notices of proposed rulemakings "to solicit input on the front end as to how any given regulatory action could be tailored to reduce or eliminate burden." The department's regulatory reform task force will review Obama-era rules on energy

development that may be repealed or revised, Esther Whieldon [reports](#).

**GOVERNORS INVITE ZINKE TO SAGE GROUSE MEETING:** Western governors on the Federal-State Sage Grouse Task Force have [invited](#) Zinke to attend a formal meeting of the state-led group in Whitefish, Mont., on June 26. Zinke has initiated an internal review of the Bureau of Land Management's nearly 100 land-use plans across 11 Western states but has not clarified the extent to which states will be involved in that effort. Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift in an email said she had "no announcements" regarding Zinke's schedule next week. He is already slated to speak on June 27 at the Western Governors' Association meeting, which is also in Whitefish.

**MONIZ: DOE BUDGET FALLS SHORT OF PERRY GOAL:** The former head of the Energy Department said he was pleased with his replacement's innovation focus, but warned that the White House's budget wouldn't support that goal. Ernest Moniz told reporters today at the unveiling of a new nonprofit analysis group he's leading that Energy Secretary Rick Perry has made some "very, very strong and positive statements" on the importance of R&D, but noted "there's a disconnect to the budget." Perry has made positive statements about DOE's Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy program, Darius Dixon [reports](#), but the proposed budget zeros the program out. "The budget, as proposed, I think is quite simply a nonstarter. I'm not the first one to have said that ... it just, across the board, doesn't do the job," Moniz said.

**WASHINGTON'S NEWEST ENERGY THINK TANK:** Moniz said the [Energy Futures Initiative](#) has been in the works for months and is "not in response to recent events," like Trump's decision to walk away from the 2015 Paris climate agreement. EFI will be focused on efforts to decarbonize the economy and is being principally staffed by his longtime aide Melanie Kenderdine and former DOE CFO Joe Hezir. An advisory board, which includes former national security adviser Brent Scowcroft, will help set direction. The former Energy secretary said that the group would be a lean operation that would pull from a network of 21 "associates" and do analyses as the work and funding came in. Several former Obama-era DOE officials are among the associates, including Moniz's former chief of staff Kevin Knobloch and Jonathan Elkind, who ran the agency's international affairs office. The initiative's initial funds come from the Emerson Collective, a group led by Laurene Powell Jobs, the widow of the late Apple chief Steve Jobs.

**THE PRESIDENT'S POWER POSSE:** The president met today with energy executives to discuss what to do about potential cyber threats to the power grid — a topic that's sparked concern particularly after the recent disclosure of a [malware toolkit](#) designed for sabotaging the grid. The meeting was the first public gathering of an outside cyber advisory group led by former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani, [reports](#) Pro Cyber's Eric Geller. American Gas Association CEO David McCurdy, Southern Company CEO Tom Fanning, ConEd CEO John McAvoy, Edison Electric Institute President Tom Kuhn and Kevin Mandia, CEO of the cybersecurity firm FireEye, were all in attendance, a White House spokesman told POLITICO, as well as Tom Bossert, the president's homeland security adviser, and Keith Alexander, the former NSA director.

**"President Trump thanked the participants** in the meeting for their efforts and underscored the importance of a continuing public and private partnership to effectively combat threats

against the energy sector, particularly the power grid," the White House said in a statement.

**THE SILENT TREATMENT:** Countries involved with the stalled Environmental Goods Agreement — which would cut tariffs on a range of green goods — expressed support on Tuesday for ending the negotiations. Notably, however, the U.S. remained silent at the meeting, Pro Trade's Adam Behsudi reports. Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Switzerland each called for negotiations to be brought to a swift conclusion — and even China, which was previously an obstacle in the talks, voiced support, saying the EGA could be a potential way for the WTO to addressing climate change. Read more.

**MAIL CALL — TRY GOOGLE:** House Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop (R-Utah) responded today to ranking member Raul Grijalva's and Democrats' letter requesting information on Interior's ongoing monument review process. Bishop noted it is "clear" they both "share a genuine concern for transparency," but asked the Arizona Democrat to join him in his efforts to reform the Antiquities Act. But Bishop noted such information is already available: "I am also pleased to let you know that after a few cursory Google searches, it appears as though the administration has already made the information you requested ... publicly available online." Read it here.

— Energy and Commerce ranking member Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), along with Reps. Bobby Rush (D-Ill.), Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.) and John Sarbanes (D-Md.), today wrote to EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, seeking details on what procedures the agency has in place to prevent Trump's special adviser and billionaire investor Carl Icahn from influencing the agency on the Renewable Fuel Standard for his own personal financial gain. Read the letter here.

#### QUICK HITS:

- Take a look at the states sending the most carbon into the air, Bloomberg.
- Norway opens up record 93 blocks for Arctic oil exploration, Financial Times.
- America's hungriest wind and solar power users: big companies, Reuters.
- Oil prices reverse course, fall alongside crude stockpiles fall, Chron.

#### WIDE WORLD OF POLITICS:

- How McConnell gets to 50 votes to repeal Obamacare
- Secrecy boosts GOP's Obamacare repeal push
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<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/afternoon-energy/2017/06/zinkes-method-to-the-methane-023424>

**Stories from POLITICO Pro**

**Zinke: Methane rule rewrite could take 'couple of years'** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/21/2017 12:41 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said today it could take years to rewrite a rule regulating methane emissions from oil and gas wells on public land.

Senate Republicans failed last month to repeal the Obama Interior Department methane rule via a Congressional Review Act, prompting Zinke to step in. The rewrite could begin now that DOI put out a notice last week to suspend the regulation, Zinke said during a budget hearing in front of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee.

"I imagine we'll be in court over it," Zinke said of the process. "It should take six months, but it will probably take a couple of years."

Zinke said he thought it would have been easier to rewrite the rule if the CRA had passed, although some senators had opposed using the CRA because the law prevents agencies from writing new rules substantially similar to those repealed.

"If that Congressional Review Act would have passed on the methane rule you wouldn't be writing anything," Sen. [Jon Tester](#) told Zinke. "You would have been forbidden from writing rules."

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**Zinke to shuffle top Interior Department career staff** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/16/2017 03:15 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is shuffling dozens of senior department staff to new positions, reassigning as many as one-quarter of the top career people into new jobs.

A spokeswoman for the agency confirmed the changes were taking place, which Jason Briefel, executive director of Senior Executive Services, told POLITICO could involve as many as 50 people.

That would be "a very large number" compared to the previous shakeups that occur when new administrations take power, Briefel said, and could require some staffers to change jobs in as little as 15 days.

A former Fish and Wildlife Service member told POLITICO a move of that breadth of the staff changes would be "unprecedented," and said the shakeup was rumored to move many of the people between DOI's various agencies.

DOI defended the moves.

"Personnel moves are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the department's



operations through matching senior executive skill sets with mission and operational requirements," said DOI spokeswoman Heather Swift said. "The president signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue."

She decline to give details of the planned job changes.

According to The Washington Post, which obtained a copy of one the letters sent to Interior staff on Thursday, officials who received notices include Interior's top climate policy official, Joel Clement, who directs the Office of Policy Analysis, as well as at least five senior FWS officials.

Among the Fish and Wildlife officials are the assistant director for international affairs, Bryan Arroyo; the southwest regional director, Benjamin Tuggle; and the southeast regional director, Cindy Dohner, according to the paper. BLM New Mexico state director Amy Lueders would move to FWS, while Bureau of Indian Affairs Director Weldon "Bruce" Loudermilk, acting Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs Michael S. Black and acting Special Trustee for American Indians Debra L. DuMontier would all be reassigned, the paper said.

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**Zinke says cannot yet detail extent of staff shuffle** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/21/2017 11:17 AM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said he could not detail the extent of staff changes among senior executives at the department because he did not know how many would accept their new assignments.

Up to 50 members of the Senior Executive Service working for the agency, including regional chiefs, received letters asking them to [take different jobs](#) in different bureaus, the SES said earlier this week.

Sen. [Tom Udall](#) (D-N.M.), the top Democrat on the Appropriations subcommittee overseeing Interior, expressed concern about the shuffle during a hearing today on Interior's budget. He asked Zinke to provide a list of workers being asked to move.

"My understanding is the scale of these changes are virtually without precedent," Udall said. "But we have no idea how these individuals were chosen for reassignment. Some of these personnel moves just don't make sense."

Udall requested by the end of the week a list of the employees being told to move, but Zinke demurred.

"I can't give a list because I don't know who's going to go — they were given a choice. There's a privacy issue until they make that choice," Zinke replied. "The movements are shifting people to either areas where their skills are better suited or getting them out of headquarters."

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Udall requested Zinke provide a list of names as soon as possible.

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**Zinke: Senior staff can accept new assignments 'or resign'** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 06/21/2017 12:51 PM EDT

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said senior executives who do not accept new postings will likely be asked to leave the department.

"They can either take the move or resign," Zinke told reporters today after a budget hearing where he was pressed for details on his planned staff shakeup.

Up to 50 department Senior Executive Service employees, including regional chiefs, received letters reassigning them to different jobs in different bureaus, the SES said earlier this week.

Zinke defended the move at a Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing, but declined to provide ranking member Sen. [Tom Udall](#) (D-N.M.) a list by the end of the week of department employees caught up in a major reassignment shuffle, saying a list could not be provided until staff members made a choice whether to make a move.

Employees targeted for the shuffle could negotiate to take a position other than the one offered, but as SES staff should be prepared to move, Zinke added.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Udall requested Zinke provide a list of names as soon as possible.

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**Interior outlines regulatory reform plans** [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 06/21/2017 10:48 AM EDT

The Interior Department has outlined its regulatory review plans, which largely encompass rethinking regulations involving the oil and gas industry.

The [notice](#), which is slated to be published in the Federal Register on Thursday, provides more detail about Interior's ongoing efforts to implement President Donald Trump's regulatory reform goals. Among other steps, the agency said it intends to use more advanced notices of proposed rulemakings "to solicit input on the front end as to how any given regulatory action could be tailored to reduce or eliminate burden."

Interior's regulatory reform task force will review several Obama-era rules on energy development that may be repealed or revised. Stemming from that effort, BLM has already said [it will rewrite](#) its hydraulic fracturing rule. Other rules being looked at include BLM's methane

waste rule and regulations involving offshore energy development.

The agency also said it is implementing Trump's order that directed agencies to identify two rules for repeal every time a new regulation is adopted.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Interior is accepting comments on its reviews but did not set a hard deadline, instead saying it will "review comments on an ongoing basis."

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### **Ex-DOE chief Moniz knocks Trump budget [Back](#)**

By Darius Dixon | 06/21/2017 01:17 PM EDT

Former Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said today he was pleased to see current Energy Secretary Rick Perry get behind technological innovation, but warned that the White House's DOE budget proposal didn't support that effort.

"I think Secretary Perry has made some very, very strong and positive statements that I fully endorse in terms of the importance of R&D, the importance of innovation," Moniz told reporters at the unveiling of the Energy Futures Initiative, a new nonprofit analysis group he's leading. "And yet, there's a disconnect to the budget."

For instance, Perry has made friendly statements about DOE's Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy program but Trump's budget zeros the program out.

"The budget, as proposed, I think is quite simply a nonstarter. I'm not the first one to have said that ... it just, across the board, doesn't do the job," Moniz said.

Perry has often highlighted his experience as Texas governor to argue that funding cuts don't necessarily undermine the DOE's mission. On Tuesday, he told lawmakers that this wasn't his "first rodeo" handling a tight budget, and that the agency's science and research goals would be [assuaged](#) in large part through management.

Moniz warned that while there may be ways to retain staff, the budget may prevent them from getting much research done.

"There's just no magic here. If Secretary Perry has a magic management formula that'd be wonderful. But I've never seen how you make something out of nothing."

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Moniz said that the focus of the Energy Futures Initiative's first study would be on the electric grid and could roll out in the fall.

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**Electric sector, feds rush to thwart 'milestone' cyber weapon** [Back](#)

By Eric Geller | 06/12/2017 04:09 PM EDT

Government officials and energy sector leaders scrambled Monday to analyze a newly discovered cyber weapon that researchers are calling a "milestone" for hackers hoping to cripple power grids.

But while all involved concede that the weapon — which may be the work of Russia-linked cyber warriors — has the power to unleash never-before-seen cyberattacks, security experts and industry representatives cautioned that the U.S. power grid is better suited than many others to fend off such a digital assault.

The energy sector has spent years wargaming such scenarios, and it has systems in place to replace damaged equipment, share resources and swap information in the wake of a massive power outage. The government has also improved its rapid-response capabilities in recent years for just such instances. And as of yet, industry representatives noted, there is no indication the malware has infiltrated U.S. power grid networks.

"Our grid benefits from significant experience with weather and other challenges and is very robust," said John Hultquist, director of cyber espionage analysis at iSIGHT, a division of the security firm FireEye.

The new digital weapon [leapt into the public eye](#) Monday morning via reports from security firms [Dragos](#) and [ESET](#). Researchers described it as a highly customized toolkit for mapping grid networks, sabotaging safety equipment and paralyzing power companies. The malware — which Dragos calls CrashOverride and ESET calls Industroyer — can seize control of switches and circuit breakers and wipe servers to delete all traces of itself. ESET claimed that it can also disable equipment designed to prevent grid overloads, potentially letting hackers cause widespread physical damage.

"This is a milestone for critical infrastructure in the West where it's been anxiously anticipated for quite some time," said Hultquist.

Experts believe Russian hackers tested the malware's new powers in a [little-noticed cyberattack](#) on the Ukrainian power grid last December, an incident that was largely overlooked amid concerns about Moscow's alleged meddling in the U.S. presidential race. The attack — which mirrored a first-of-its-kind 2015 [digital strike](#) on Ukraine's power grid — briefly turned off one-fifth of the electric power generated in Kiev, Ukraine's capital.

"This capability now appears to be in the hands of a government who has violated every norm in this space with increasingly aggressive behavior," Hultquist said. "I doubt Ukraine is the last place we will see this capability deployed."

The electric sector jumped into action shortly before the reports dropped. Researchers briefed the industry's [cyber information sharing center](#) on Sunday morning, and the group began distributing technical data about the malware that afternoon. An [industry coordinating group](#) known as the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council is also in contact with the Department of Energy,

according to Scott Aaronson, the group's secretary.

Elsewhere, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation — the electricity industry's main nonprofit regulatory body — is preparing a public alert on the new malware and will release it "as soon as possible," according to spokeswoman Kimberly Mielcarek.

"There is no question that cyberthreats like the one in Ukraine are real and that constant vigilance is needed to protect the reliability of the North American grid," Mielcarek said.

Industry forces are also working with DHS, which has a cyber command center constantly monitoring hacking threats. NERC has a representative at the that center — known as the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center — who helps coordinate between DHS and the electric sector.

A DHS spokesman said the department was aware of the malware and was "working with the researchers and industry on this issue," but declined to discuss specifics.

For years, the public and private sectors have operated joint exercises to try and prepare for the types of bruising attacks that CrashOverride may unleash. Electric companies and government agencies gather every two years for drills that simulate digital and physical disruptions at power facilities and encourage collaboration to resolve the problems.

The most recent exercise, in 2015, brought together top executives from energy firms and senior officials from DHS, the Pentagon, the FBI, the Department of Energy, the White House and other federal agencies.

The exercise "highlighted the importance of well-coordinated communications," according to [a summary report](#). But participants complained that the information sharing center's portal "needed enhancements to handle real-time, urgent communication," the report said. "During the exercise, information was quickly buried within the portal and it became difficult to highlight important information."

A major priority for electric companies is being able to continue operations despite network disruptions — what Aaronson called operating "in a degraded state."

"What we have learned from any number of these incidents [is] that you cannot protect everything from everything," Aaronson said. "We have to focus on restoration, response and recovery in order to ensure that we can continue to provide the product that is critical to the life, health and safety of Americans."

The electric sector also prides itself on what Aaronson called "cyber mutual assistance," in which unaffected companies send technicians to assist the digitally-targeted operators.

In general, security experts said, the American power system is less vulnerable to a large-scale digital disruption than systems in other countries.

But those same experts, as well as federal officials and even industry representatives, acknowledge that the threat is still grave and that more work needs to be done. And preparations

for thwarting CrashOverride's potentially damaging, information-wiping, recovery-system-immobilizing attacks are based on the scant few examples of what such an incapacitating cyberattack might look like.

The CrashOverride toolkit is only the second known example of malware designed to disrupt a power facility. The United States and Israel are believed to have deployed the first such virus, codenamed Stuxnet, in the mid-2000s to sabotage Iranian nuclear centrifuges. But despite its formidable design and potentially devastating consequences, experts said the industry would handle it through normal channels.

CrashOverride is "another example of malware that has the potential to have an impact on grid operations," said Aaronson. "But notice the word that I used there: it is another one. And there will be another one tomorrow, and another one after that."

John Chirhart, federal technical director at the security firm Tenable, said it was important to note that the malware did not use any zero-day vulnerabilities, pieces of code that exploit undiscovered flaws.

"With all of the buzz around Industroyer being 'the next Stuxnet,' you'd think it was one of the most sophisticated threats out there," he said, "but with no zero days in the Industroyer payload, the significance of this malware as a stand-alone event is small."

Aaronson cited the flurry of chatter that started Sunday as evidence that the proper response mechanisms were in place.

"I think we are well positioned to deal with this particular threat and all of the ones that are yet to come," he said.

*Tim Starks contributed to this report.*

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## **Giuliani gathers energy executives to brief Trump on cyberthreats [Back](#)**

By Eric Geller | 06/21/2017 01:21 PM EDT

President Donald Trump met today with energy sector executives to discuss cyber threats to the nation's power grid.

The meeting was the first public gathering of an outside cyber advisory group led by former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

Tom Bossert, the president's homeland security adviser, and Keith Alexander, the former NSA director, also attended.

"President Trump thanked the participants in the meeting for their efforts and underscored the

importance of a continuing public and private partnership to effectively combat threats against the energy sector, particularly the power grid," the White House said in a statement.

The meeting focused on the "unique challenges the sector faces and strategic initiatives, both underway and proposed, to address the evolution of malicious cyber activity," the statement said.

Joining Giuliani were American Gas Association CEO David McCurdy, Southern Company CEO Tom Fanning, ConEd CEO John McAvoy, Edison Electric Institute President Tom Kuhn and Kevin Mandia, CEO of the cybersecurity firm FireEye, a White House spokesman told POLITICO.

Trump signed a cyber executive order in May that called for agencies to assess the energy sector's cyber resilience.

The meeting follows the disclosure of a sophisticated [malware toolkit](#) designed for sabotaging power grids. Russian hackers are believed to have used the malware to take down part of Ukraine's grid last December.

"The President made clear that his Administration is committed to working closely with infrastructure providers, improving the existing public and private partnership framework, and fostering collaborative relationships for effective risk management," the White House said.

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### **Final obstacle to completing green goods talks: China [Back](#)**

By Megan Cassella and Adam Behsudi | 12/02/2016 05:01 AM EDT

Trade and commerce ministers from a majority of the 17 countries involved in a deal to promote environmentally friendly goods are descending upon Geneva this weekend with the goal of wrapping up the three-year-old negotiations, with one conspicuous absence: Chinese Minister of Commerce Gao Hucheng.

China's decision not to send its top trade official to what is supposed to be a concluding ministerial sends a strong signal that its delegation will not move over the next few days to resolve the outstanding issues standing in the way of finishing the Environmental Goods Agreement, say some involved in the talks. Others contend the vice minister will be a fine stand-in, and he has in fact taken Gao's place at a number of previous negotiating rounds.

Either way, the move is a sign of how out of step Beijing has become with the other countries involved in the agreement — including major players like the United States, the European Union and Japan — who together comprise about 90 percent of world trade in environmental goods. All of them agreed this summer to a self-imposed deadline of this weekend, but with ministers slated to begin arriving Friday, several of those involved in the talks say they are worried too many sensitive issues remain unresolved.

And with the deal remaining the last possible agreement the Obama administration has a chance to conclude before it leaves office, officials involved say its success or failure this weekend has implications that stretch far beyond trade in environmental goods alone.

"The outcome remains uncertain, but ministers also have in mind that the success of the EGA will also send a strong signal that major trade deals can be concluded, and that the WTO still has an important role to play," said one official involved in the talks who requested anonymity. "If the outcome is different, the future of plurilateral and multilateral market access negotiations is seriously compromised."

All of the officials interviewed for this story indicated that while a handful of issues remain, China and its inflexible stances on several aspects of the deal remains the biggest obstacle to reaching an agreement.

When discussing how long countries will have to phase out tariffs after the agreement goes into effect, for example, every delegation except China agreed that seven years should be the maximum amount of time allowed, one official involved in the talks said. Beijing, meanwhile, is saying that as many as 15 years should be allowed before tariffs need to be fully eliminated on some goods covered under the agreement — a stance several others are characterizing as unacceptable.

As for tariff levels, China raised again this week the question of whether tariffs should be eliminated entirely or simply reduced. All other delegations say there is no question that the deal has always been a tariff-elimination agreement, and they point to the January 2014 [statement](#) from Davos, Switzerland, that launched the deal as proof that China has known that all along.

On the product list itself, the chair of the negotiations released on Wednesday evening an "A List" of more than 250 items that presumptively would be included under any final deal. China was one of two delegations to object to any of the items, with the other — Chinese Taipei — raising a much smaller fuss, said another official.

"The level of frustration in Geneva with China," one senior official said, "is extreme."

The creation of the "A List," however, is an example of some progress being made this week. It shows that a majority of the roughly 300 items previously put forth as products whose tariffs would be cut under the agreement have been cleared for inclusion by nearly all except China. The next step for negotiators is to work their way through the "B List" — comprised of around five dozen more sensitive items, including wood products and bicycles — to include as many as possible in the pact.

"From the business community's perspective, the items on the 'A List' in our view would represent the bare minimum of what's necessary to conclude an agreement," said one business source who traveled to Geneva for the negotiations. "All of the efforts should be on moving some products from the 'B List' to the 'A List,' rather than vice versa."

Negotiators are racing to get as much as possible finished Friday so that ministers have only a finite number of issues to tackle this weekend, boosting the chances that an agreement can be finalized. Some worry that simply too much has been left for ministers to tackle, while others



emphasize that had to be the way, since so many of the remaining items have become interrelated.

The trick, one official said, will be for ministers to agree on a "package deal" that would satisfy issues surrounding about 10-12 core products as well as other, text-based issues.

For that to happen, though, the Chinese will need to engage with fellow members and willingly compromise on at least some issues, officials said.

"We're seeing the complete inability of the Chinese to take a leadership role on trade or the environment," the senior official said.

After China positioned itself as the next leader in global trade at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Peru late last month, the senior official added, failing to conclude the green goods talks this weekend would expose the country's hypocrisy on trade.

"History proves that protectionism leads nowhere," Chinese President Xi Jinping said in a Nov. 20 speech at APEC, according to remarks reported in the state-run news outlet China Daily.

"At this crucial stage of Asia-Pacific development," Xi added, "we need to work together for win-win outcomes, oppose all forms of protectionism and inject positive energy into economic globalization."

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## **WTO members support resumption of talks on green goods trade deal [Back](#)**

By Adam Behsudi | 06/21/2017 10:56 AM EDT

The United States remained silent at a meeting where Japan, the European Union and even China expressed varying degrees of support for concluding negotiations on a stalled agreement that would cut tariffs on a broad range of green goods.

The statements in support of the Environmental Goods Agreement came at a Tuesday meeting of the World Trade Organization's Committee on Trade and Environment, according to diplomatic sources in Geneva, and marked the first efforts to encourage a resumption of talks, which stalled in December.

At the meeting, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Switzerland called for negotiations to be brought to a swift conclusion. China, which complicated efforts to reach a deal last year, even voiced support for it on Tuesday, saying it would be one way the WTO could contribute to addressing climate change. However, the Chinese delegation cautioned that "common but differential responsibility" among nations must be reflected in a final agreement, diplomatic sources said.

The European Union said Tuesday it was committed to concluding a deal "once circumstances allow us to do so and participants are ready for engaging," sources said.

The EGA talks were halted late last year after the 18 WTO members involved failed to reach a deal on the nature and length of tariff cuts on roughly 300 environmentally friendly goods, like LED light bulbs, oil-spill containment booms and reagents used to test water quality.

After trade ministers failed to reach consensus in December, negotiations went into hibernation amid the change of administration in the U.S.

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### **Secrecy boosts GOP's Obamacare repeal push [Back](#)**

By Adam Cancryn | 06/20/2017 08:07 PM EDT

Senate Republicans are closer than ever to voting to repeal Obamacare after three months of work that's unparalleled in its secrecy and speed. They're unapologetic, though. Because so far, it's working.

The closed-door deliberations, which have left even some GOP senators in the dark, have prompted widespread charges of hypocrisy and even a fair amount of heartburn within a party that railed for seven years against Democrats' rush to pass their 2010 health care reform law.

But it's that secrecy that has also helped put the GOP within potential reach of dismantling Obamacare and handing President Donald Trump his first big legislative win.

By keeping the process under wraps, Senate Republican leaders have largely bypassed the headaches and inevitable blowback when any ambitious piece of legislation sees the light of day — especially one that has already become wildly unpopular if polls on the House GOP's effort to overhaul the U.S. health care system are any indication.

They're also betting that for all the stone-throwing from the left, voters already convinced that Congress is broken won't punish Senate Republicans for putting yet another dent in the institution.

"I've always said I would've preferred a more open process," Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) said. "But if you just wait and say, 'Oh, we want an open process,' then you never get that. So at some point you've got to play the cards dealt to you."

The Senate GOP's speed play comes after House Republicans barely pushed through their own version of Obamacare repeal — an effort hampered by fierce criticism over both its secrecy and Congressional Budget Office projections the proposal would leave millions more Americans without health insurance.

Senate Republicans pledged to learn from the backlash and start from scratch on their own bill. Instead, they appear to be largely keeping the House-passed bill's framework and moved their deliberations completely out of public view.

GOP lawmakers have spent the two months since debating broad policy during closed-door lunches, and confining the details to small-group meetings. The actual bill-writing has fallen to an even more select group.

"The leader is really writing this bill," said Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), referring to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and his staff. "I mean, we can say the Finance Committee is. We can say the Budget Committee is. We can say the HELP Committee is. But the leader's office is really writing the bill."

That's left much of the rest of the conference in the dark on the legislation's final details, prompting uneasiness among lawmakers facing daily questions about the bill. A number of GOP senators say they've expressed private concerns about the process to Republican leaders, and have increasingly tried to fend off criticism by saying publicly they wish the conference had taken a different route.

"Health care is such an important thing, I think we should've debated it in open, in committee hearings," said Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, perhaps the most outspoken Republican skeptic. "If you do it on one side only, what you're setting yourself up for is failure."

Sen. Pat Toomey, who has spearheaded conservative senators' effort to quickly end enhanced funding for Obamacare's Medicaid expansion, bristled at questions about the GOP's strategic secrecy.

"You can ask leadership for their reason," the Pennsylvania Republican said. "They do what they do."

Still, GOP senators aren't slowing the march toward a vote, reasoning that the closed-door process has boosted their ability to briskly debate and cobble together proposals that could reshape health care for millions of people.

Republicans have only a limited period to repeal Obamacare under arcane Senate rules that require only 50 votes. They say that bypassing public hearings and committee markups saves valuable time that would otherwise be consumed by unyielding Democratic opposition. And avoiding the public scrutiny that comes with debating every provision in public has upped the odds that Senate Republicans can keep their thin majority united long enough to push the bill through the chamber.

"At the end of the day, you're judged by what you get," said one GOP senator, dismissing concerns about the lack of public feedback on the bill. "At the end of the day, they're not going to be critical of how we got there."

Others, including McConnell, wave off criticism of the GOP's tactics as identical to the Democrats' approach in the run-up to Obamacare's party-line passage seven years ago. In fact, the approaches differ sharply: The 2009 debate over Obamacare spanned more than a year and included public hearings, committee markups and roundtables, with President Barack Obama at times taking questions directly from congressional Republicans.

Pressed on the contrast, GOP senators argue that lawmakers have nevertheless debated health

care countless times in the several years since Obamacare's passage.

"There's been all this talk about having hearings," Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) said, exasperated. "My God, I went through how many hours of hearings?"

That hasn't stopped Senate Democrats from seizing on the GOP's secrecy, hoping to boost public criticism of a bill that they're powerless to stop. During an all-night occupation of the Senate floor, Democrats railed against the repeal effort not only for rolling back Obamacare but for threatening to forever rewrite the rules for passing bills in a chamber famously known as the world's greatest deliberative body.

"Perhaps some of the biggest issues of humanity were debated in an open forum — we have records of those discussions, records of those deliberations," said New Jersey Democrat Cory Booker. "Tonight, it's remarkable to me, it's almost tragic to me, to see a process that is so broken, a process that is so secretive."

Urged on by liberal activists, Democrats are weighing the strategy of grinding the Senate to a halt, in hopes of dragging out the chamber's work and forcing the repeal bill to go public long enough to mobilize stronger opposition.

But Republicans' secrecy has succeeded even in muting that resistance.

Activists have had no new proposals to rally against, and groups across the health care spectrum that hoped to help improve the House-passed repeal bill have found few opportunities to pressure senators over what's ultimately included in the bill.

As for the public, Sen. Richard Burr (R-N.C.) dismissed speculation that voters would make Republicans pay a price.

"If you really want to judge whether Obamacare is a good election-year issue, then look at the last three election cycles," he said.

*Jennifer Haberkorn and Burgess Everett contributed to this report.*

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**Trump spikes the ball after Georgia election win** [Back](#)

By Alex Isenstadt and Eliana Johnson | 06/21/2017 05:19 AM EDT

Rattled by Donald Trump's tumultuous first five months in office, the Republican Party breathed a collective sigh of relief Tuesday after a much-needed special election victory in Georgia. The White House also exhaled: After Republican Karen Handel was declared the victor in a race billed as a referendum on the new president, Trump fired off a series of celebratory tweets.

"Well, the Special Elections are over and those that want to MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN are 5 and 0! All the Fake News, all the money spent = 0," wrote Trump.

In the run-up to the Georgia race, Republicans worried that a loss could be the harbinger of a 2018 train wreck. There were fears that a Handel loss could ripple across the political landscape, spurring GOP retirements, dampening candidate recruitment and turbo-charging Democrats looking to bounce back following the soul-crushing 2016 election.

The contest, the most expensive House race ever, was viewed by many as the first major strength test of the Democratic resistance to Trump. In the final days before the election, several White House aides said they didn't know whether Handel would be able to fend off Jon Ossoff, a 30-year-old filmmaker and former congressional aide who became a cause celebre among liberals nationwide.

But she did, and the president's supporters viewed the outcome as proof that Trump continues to connect with voters.

Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, an informal Trump adviser and a past occupant of the Georgia seat, contended that the handful of special elections this year revealed that voters were tuning out the Russia scandal that has consumed Washington. He argued that the political establishment, much as it did during the 2016 campaign, continued to underestimate the connection many Americans felt with the president.

"He may be resonating with people in a way that some don't get," Gingrich said. "Maybe there's a whole new conversation taking place in a way that none of us understand."

It would be a mistake to say Republicans are in the clear. With Trump confronting an expanding federal probe into his 2016 campaign's ties to Russia, party strategists concede they are still facing serious headwinds in their efforts to retain the House majority in 2018.

And Tuesday's results weren't entirely rosy. Handel's win disguised the fact that the party only narrowly held on to a Republican-oriented Georgia seat, and barely won another race Tuesday for a conservative South Carolina seat that few thought would be competitive. Both outcomes could easily be interpreted as warning signs for the GOP.

Still, given the national spotlight on Georgia, Republicans breathed easier after the race was called for Handel.

"The Democrats threw the kitchen sink at this deal and they've come up empty again. They haven't won an election all year, and they probably won't until November in New Jersey," said Scott Reed, the chief political strategist at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which spent more than \$1 million on ads boosting Handel.

On Tuesday evening, Trump, who previously traveled to Georgia to appear with the Republican candidate, weighed in with four tweets highlighting Handel's performance and one congratulating Ralph Norman in South Carolina. A text message sent to Trump supporters noted that Democrats "lose again (0-4). Total disarray. The MAGA Mandate is stronger than ever."

Handel's win could have immediate implications for her party, possibly helping to dissuade veteran lawmakers — some of whom have been spooked by Trump's underwater approval ratings — from forgoing reelection bids. Hoping to nudge along Republican retirements,

Democrats have been recruiting challengers to longtime GOP House members like California Reps. Ed Royce and Dana Rohrabacher and New Jersey Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, who haven't faced serious challenges in recent years but are likely to in 2018. The approach is similar to the one Republicans used with success in 2010, the year the GOP recaptured the House majority.

The Georgia outcome could also give a boost to Republican recruiting, which stalled as the political environment worsened for the party. Several blue-chip GOP recruits, including Wisconsin Rep. Sean Duffy and Indiana Rep. Susan Brooks, had announced they would not be running for Senate — choosing to run for reelection to safe House seats rather than pursue Senate seats in an uncertain environment. Now, as Republicans try to persuade other House members to run for Senate, including Fred Upton in Michigan and Luke Messer in Indiana, the Georgia outcome could offer reassurance.

For Republicans confronting the hurdle of running in areas where Trump is unpopular, Handel's campaign seemed to offer a template for how to run. In a suburban Atlanta district filled with upper-income and highly educated voters, Handel managed to win over Republican voters who had cooled on Trump. In days leading up to the election, one GOP poll found that Trump's approval rating in the district had plummeted to 45 percent.

Handel maneuvered carefully, declaring her support for the president without fully embracing him. She had Trump and Vice President Mike Pence to the district but chose to hold private fundraisers with them rather than public rallies. On the trail, Handel said that she wouldn't be an extension of the White House.

Rather than talking about Trump, Handel focused her fire on Ossoff, casting him as a liberal and tying him to House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, a reviled figure in conservative districts like the one he was running in.

But the biggest source of relief for Republicans was the revelation that the party's base hasn't abandoned the president.

While Trump has failed to follow through on many of his big-ticket campaign promises, polling continues to show that most bedrock Republicans approve of the job he is doing. That dynamic played out in Georgia where, confronting a mammoth Democratic turnout operation and an energized liberal base, GOP voters turned out in droves.

What's still unclear is whether the Georgia win will encourage GOP lawmakers to get behind Trump's troubled legislative agenda. The president has vowed to pass health care and tax reform and an infrastructure package — yet all three face high hurdles on Capitol Hill.

As they digested Tuesday's results, Republicans cautioned that electoral peril still lies ahead — they pointed out that special elections like the one in Georgia are often poor indicators of the political environment.

In the lead-up to the 2010 election, for example, Republicans fell short in a special election for an upstate New York congressional seat the party had held since Reconstruction. At the time, operatives and analysts duly issued doomsday predictions. When the midterms arrived,

Republicans captured 63 seats and the House majority.

Republicans continue to see plenty of reason for concern. They note that historical trends aren't favorable, either. During a closed-door meeting with lawmakers last week, House Speaker Paul Ryan reminded the GOP Conference that midterms are traditionally unkind for the party in power during a president's first term.

"I don't care who the Republican president is, we know the history of midterm elections," said Vin Weber, a former GOP congressman and longtime party strategist. "Regardless of the president, we're going to see a substantially more energized Democratic base next year. The question is, do we lose the majority or come close to losing the majority?"

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**From:** Scott Cameron  
**Sent:** 2017-06-23T08:50:34-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Fwd: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to Secretary  
re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
**Received:** 2017-06-23T08:50:48-04:00  
[ATT00001.htm](#)  
[EST-0003086\\_InvasiveMussels6-21-17.pdf](#)  
[2017.0425 PNWER ltr to Zinke re QZM.pdf](#)  
[ATT00002.htm](#)

Another reason to include something on invasive mussels in the Secretary's WGA speech next week?

Thanks,  
Scott  
Scott J. Cameron  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Policy, Management and Budget  
Department of the Interior

Phone: 202 208 0969  
Cell service 202 706 9031

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

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**Subject:** Fwd: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 -  
Congressional Letter to Secretary re: Invasive Mussels in Montana

Scott, Aurelia,  
The attached letter to Secretary Zinke is from 14 Congressional representatives regarding mussels and the CRB (with specific attention to watercraft inspection and decontamination from the lower Colorado). In view of your meetings next week, I won't make any assumptions as to whether you've already received it, and for reference I'm attaching a similar letter from the executive officers of the



Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER).

The DTS system has tasked the NISC Secretariat to develop an initial response to both, which we will be feeding back up the chain per the requested timelines. In that regard, I would be interested in getting any immediate updates on your discussions in Helena that might be relevant for the response.

Regards,  
Stas

~~~~

Stanley W. Burgiel, Ph.D.  
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"...we can do this..."

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Date: Fri, Jun 23, 2017 at 6:39 AM

Subject: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to Secretary re: Invasive Mussels in Montana

To: Fabien Laurier <[fabien\\_laurier@ios.doi.gov](mailto:fabien_laurier@ios.doi.gov)>, Jamie Reaser <[Jamie\\_Reaser@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Jamie_Reaser@ios.doi.gov)>, Jason Kirkey <[jason\\_kirkey@ios.doi.gov](mailto:jason_kirkey@ios.doi.gov)>, Jeffrey Morisette <[jeffrey\\_morisette@ios.doi.gov](mailto:jeffrey_morisette@ios.doi.gov)>, Jhoset Burgos Rodriguez <[jhoset\\_burgosrodriguez@ios.doi.gov](mailto:jhoset_burgosrodriguez@ios.doi.gov)>, Mark Frey <[mark\\_frey@nps.gov](mailto:mark_frey@nps.gov)>, Sarah Veatch <[sarah\\_veatch@ios.doi.gov](mailto:sarah_veatch@ios.doi.gov)>, Stas Burgiel <[Stanley\\_Burgiel@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Stanley_Burgiel@ios.doi.gov)>

Cc: Hilary Smith <[hilary\\_smith@ios.doi.gov](mailto:hilary_smith@ios.doi.gov)>

Good Morning Team,

The subject letter, dated June 21, 2017, was received in DTS yesterday evening.

**ONE WEEK TURNAROUND - The response for Secretary's signature is due on July 5, 2017**

Kelsey

--

**Kelsey A. Brantley** | Coordinator for NISC-Sec and ISAC Operations

National Invasive Species Council Secretariat (NISC-Sec)

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary

1849 C Street, N.W. | Mail Stop 3530 | Washington, DC 20240

tel 202.208.4122 | fax 202.208.4118 | mobile 202.577.7012

e-mail | [Kelsey\\_Brantley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Kelsey_Brantley@ios.doi.gov)

"We can do this..."



**To:** Scott Cameron[scott\_cameron@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov];  
micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov[micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov];  
amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov[amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov]; Downey  
Magallanes[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Laura Rigas  
**Sent:** 2017-06-23T09:00:56-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to Secretary  
re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
**Received:** 2017-06-23T09:01:08-04:00

Any reason we shouldn't have him announce it Tue at WGA? My only worry  
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Laura Keehner Rigas  
Communications Director  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
(202) 897-7022 cell  
@Interior

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> Department of the Interior  
>  
> Phone: 202 208 0969  
> Cell service 202 706 9031  
>  
> Sent from my iPhone  
>  
> Begin forwarded message:  
>  
> \*From:\* "Burgiel, Stanley" <stanley\_burgiel@ios.doi.gov>  
> \*To:\* Scott Cameron <scott\_cameron@ios.doi.gov>, Aurelia Skipwith <  
> aurelia\_skipwith@ios.doi.gov>  
> \*Cc:\* Hilary Smith <hilary\_smith@ios.doi.gov>, Jamie Reaser <  
> jamie\_reaser@ios.doi.gov>, Sarah Abdelrahim <sarah\_abdelrahim@ios.doi.gov>,  
> Joel Clement <Joel\_Clement@ios.doi.gov>  
> \*Subject:\* \*Fwd: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional  
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> ~~~  
> Stanley W. Burgiel, Ph.D.  
> Asst. Director, Policy & Program Coordination  
> National Invasive Species Council (NISC) Secretariat  
> 1849 C Street, NW, Room 3524, Washington, DC 20240 USA  
> o +1.202.208.4163, c +1.202.297.5143, stas\_burgiel@ios.doi.gov  
>  
> \*"...we can do this..."\*  
>  
> ----- Forwarded message -----  
> From: Brantley, Kelsey <kelsey\_brantley@ios.doi.gov>  
> Date: Fri, Jun 23, 2017 at 6:39 AM  
> Subject: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to  
> Secretary re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
> To: Fabien Laurier <fabien\_laurier@ios.doi.gov>, Jamie Reaser <  
> Jamie\_Reaser@ios.doi.gov>, Jason Kirkey <jason\_kirkey@ios.doi.gov>, Jeffrey  
> Morisette <jeffrey\_morisette@ios.doi.gov>, Jhoset Burgos Rodriguez <  
> jhoset\_burgosrodriguez@ios.doi.gov>, Mark Frey <mark\_frey@nps.gov>, Sarah  
> Veatch <sarah\_veatch@ios.doi.gov>, Stas Burgiel <Stanley\_Burgiel@ios.doi.gov>  
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> <noname.html>  
> <EST-0003086\_InvasiveMussels6-21-17.pdf>  
> <2017.0425 PNWER ltr to Zinke re QZM.pdf>  
> <noname.html>

**To:** Laura Rigas[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Scott Cameron[scott\_cameron@ios.doi.gov];  
micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov[micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov];  
amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov[amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov]; Downey  
Magallanes[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Heather Swift  
**Sent:** 2017-06-23T09:05:06-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to Secretary  
re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
**Received:** 2017-06-23T09:05:13-04:00

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Sent from my iPhone

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>> ----- Forwarded message -----  
>> From: Brantley, Kelsey <kelsey\_brantley@ios.doi.gov>  
>> Date: Fri, Jun 23, 2017 at 6:39 AM  
>> Subject: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to  
>> Secretary re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
>> To: Fabien Laurier <fabien\_laurier@ios.doi.gov>, Jamie Reaser <  
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>> \*Kelsey A. Brantley\* | Coordinator for NISC-Sec and ISAC Operations  
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amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov[amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov]; Downey  
Magallanes[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Scott Cameron  
**Sent:** 2017-06-23T09:29:49-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to Secretary  
re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
**Received:** 2017-06-23T09:29:58-04:00

Ok by me. WGA would like it to be a joint press release. Would be a nice love fest moment with WGA.

Thanks,  
Scott  
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Phone: 202 208 0969  
Cell service 202 706 9031

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\*From:\* "Burgiel, Stanley"  
<[stanley\\_burgiel@ios.doi.gov](mailto:stanley_burgiel@ios.doi.gov)>

\*To:\* Scott Cameron <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)>, Aurelia Skipwith <

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\*Subject:\* \*Fwd: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED:  
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[stas\\_burgiel@ios.doi.gov](mailto:stas_burgiel@ios.doi.gov)

\*"...we can do this..."\*

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Brantley, Kelsey <[kelsey\\_brantley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kelsey_brantley@ios.doi.gov)>

Date: Fri, Jun 23, 2017 at 6:39 AM

Subject: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to

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To: Fabien Laurier <[fabien\\_laurier@ios.doi.gov](mailto:fabien_laurier@ios.doi.gov)>, Jamie Reaser <

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<noname.html>

<EST-0003086\_InvasiveMussels6-21-17.pdf>

<2017.0425 PNWER ltr to Zinke re QZM.pdf>

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**From:** Moody, Joan  
**Sent:** 2017-06-23T10:59:08-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Fwd: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to Secretary re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
**Received:** 2017-06-23T10:59:16-04:00

Hi all. Is this off hold now? Did you want me to call WGA to draft a joint release? Joan

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Cameron, Scott <scott\_cameron@ios.doi.gov>  
**Date:** Fri, Jun 23, 2017 at 10:51 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to Secretary re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
**To:** "Moody, Joan" <joan\_moody@ios.doi.gov>

Joan, first of several emails regarding a DOI/WGA joint press releases, for Monday or Tuesday.

Thanks,

Scott

Scott J. Cameron

Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, and

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget

Office of the Secretary of the Interior

Desk 202 208 0969

Cell 202 706 9031

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Scott Cameron <scott\_cameron@ios.doi.gov>  
**Date:** Fri, Jun 23, 2017 at 9:29 AM  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to Secretary re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
**To:** Heather Swift <heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** Laura Rigas <laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov>, "micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov" <micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov>, "amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov" <amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov>, Downey Magallanes <downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov>

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Morisette <[jeffrey\\_morisette@ios.doi.gov](mailto:jeffrey_morisette@ios.doi.gov)>, Jhosef  
Burgos Rodriguez <

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National Invasive Species Council Secretariat (NISC-Sec)

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary

1849 C Street, N.W. | Mail Stop 3530 | Washington, DC 20240

\*tel\* 202.208.4122 | \*fax\* 202.208.4118 | \*mobile\* 202.577.7012

\*e-mail\* | [Kelsey\\_Brantley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Kelsey_Brantley@ios.doi.gov)

\*"We can do this..."\*

<noname.html>

<EST-0003086\_InvasiveMussels6-21-17.pdf>

<2017.0425 PNWER ltr to Zinke re QZM.pdf>

<noname.html>

--

*Joan Moody  
Senior Public Affairs Specialist  
Office of the Secretary MIB 6226  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240  
202-208-3280  
[Joan\\_Moody@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Joan_Moody@ios.doi.gov)*

**To:** Laura Rigas[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Paul Ross[paul\_ross@ios.doi.gov]; Scott Cameron[scott\_cameron@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Moody, Joan  
**Sent:** 2017-06-23T11:01:56-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT ACTION REQUIRED: DTS #EST-0003086 - Congressional Letter to Secretary re: Invasive Mussels in Montana  
**Received:** 2017-06-23T11:02:03-04:00

Please excuse my confusing the hold (b)(6) Should I draft something on this with the relevant contact?

On Fri, Jun 23, 2017 at 10:59 AM, Moody, Joan <joan\_moody@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

Hi all. Is this off hold now? Did you want me to call WGA to draft a joint release? Joan

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**To:** "Moody, Joan" <joan\_moody@ios.doi.gov>

Joan, first of several emails regarding a DOI/WGA joint press releases, for Monday or Tuesday.

Thanks,

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Desk 202 208 0969

Cell 202 706 9031

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**To:** Heather Swift <heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** Laura Rigas <laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov>, "micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov" <micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov>, "amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov" <amanda\_kaster@ios.doi.gov>, Downey Magallanes <downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov>

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The subject letter, dated June 21, 2017, was received in  
DTS yesterday

evening.

\*ONE WEEK TURNAROUND - The response for  
Secretary's signature is due on

July 5, 2017\*

Kelsey

--

\*Kelsey A. Brantley\* | Coordinator for NISC-Sec and  
ISAC Operations

National Invasive Species Council Secretariat (NISC-  
Sec)

U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary

1849 C Street, N.W. | Mail Stop 3530 | Washington,  
DC 20240

\*tel\* 202.208.4122 | \*fax\* 202.208.4118 \*|\*  
\*mobile\* 202.577.7012

\*e-mail\* | [Kelsey\\_Brantley@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Kelsey_Brantley@ios.doi.gov)

\*"We can do this..."\*

<noname.html>

<EST-0003086\_InvasiveMussels6-21-17.pdf>

<2017.0425 PNWER ltr to Zinke re QZM.pdf>

<noname.html>

--

*Joan Moody  
Senior Public Affairs Specialist  
Office of the Secretary MIB 6226  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240  
202-208-3280  
[Joan\\_Moody@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Joan_Moody@ios.doi.gov)*

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*Washington, D.C. 20240*  
*202-208-3280*  
*Joan Moody@ios.doi.gov*

**To:** Cameron, Scott[scott\_cameron@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Moody, Joan[joan\_moody@ios.doi.gov]; Laura Rigas[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Jamie Reaser[jamie\_reaser@ios.doi.gov]; Joel Clement[joel\_clement@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Smith, Hilary  
**Sent:** 2017-06-23T15:49:45-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: DRAFT DOI-WGA Release on Invasive Mussels  
**Received:** 2017-06-23T15:49:52-04:00

Scott, we may have some factual corrections from the program side, if it's ok to send them up for consideration?

On Fri, Jun 23, 2017 at 3:43 PM, Cameron, Scott <[scott\\_cameron@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_cameron@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

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Thanks,  
Scott  
Scott J. Cameron  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, and  
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget  
Office of the Secretary of the Interior  
Desk 202 208 0969  
Cell 202 706 9031

On Fri, Jun 23, 2017 at 3:26 PM, Moody, Joan <[joan\\_moody@ios.doi.gov](mailto:joan_moody@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Good Afternoon to all. Attached and below please find a draft DOI-WGA press release that has not been approved by either DOI or WGA. Because Interior is hoping this can go out on Monday, I am sending it for simultaneous review to enable changes and clearance from you and your leaders before then.

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Secretary Zinke and Governor Bullock Announce Initiatives to Protect

## Western Ecosystems and Hydroelectric Facilities from Invasive Species

WHITEFISH, MT—Today at the Western Governors Association meeting, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Montana Governor Steve Bullock, WGA chair, released a package [MJF1] of four dozen actions and initiatives designed to protect areas in the West from the economic and ecological threats posed by invasive species of mussels.

A team of more than 70 federal, state, and tribal government officials has been working on the package for the past three months. Invasive mussels clog hydroelectric facilities and irrigation systems, as well as damaging aquatic ecosystems. In the Great Lakes region, invasive mussels cause more than half a billion dollars of damage a year, and have dramatically changed the ecosystem. They pose a similar threat across the West, particularly in the Columbia River Basin and [MJF2] \_\_\_\_\_. ..

DRAFT UNAPPROVED QUOTE: "Stopping the spread of invasive mussels and increasing federal-state-tribal coordination are both critical priorities in order to ensure that we maintain hydropower as a clean, reliable, cost-effective source of energy for the West," Secretary Zinke observed. "By working as an integrated team to eradicate and control invasive mussels, Americans will be able to experience the full benefits of hydropower for years to come."

Zinke noted that experience in some areas has shown that a hydroelectric dam infested with invasive mussels may need to spend \$500,000 a year in extra maintenance to control the damage posed by these pests, costs that then get passed on to consumers and businesses. Invasive mussels also may potentially hinder hydropower operations by disrupting ecosystems to the degree that they trigger new endangered species listings, which have limited hydropower potential in some areas. In addition, invasives threaten agriculture, navigation facilities, and the biodiversity that supports much of the Western outdoor recreation industry.

INSERT WGA CHAIR QUOTE :Governor Bullock said that, “

Bullock noted active participation in preparing the package by the states including Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, and Utah.

In addition to WGA, the agencies involved on the team included staff from Interior’s Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs,

National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management as well as tribes and staff from other departments including the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Agriculture and Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The package developed by the team includes federal, state, and tribal initiatives. Interior's bureaus, for example, collectively spend about \$8 million a year on combatting invasive mussels. In the current fiscal year, the department is increasing that spending by \$1 million through the Bureau of Reclamation. In Fiscal Year 2018, Interior requested Congress to provide Reclamation with another \$4.5 million increase. Likewise, the Army Corps of Engineers has also committed \$5 million to this effort. Other parts of the package include

\_\_\_\_\_.

The whole package is available for viewing at \_\_\_\_\_.

---

[MJF1]Insert web link

[MJF2]Suggest name other basins and/or specify where the mussels already have invaded and where the spread of the species poses a threat in the West. Where in Montana have they been found?

--

Hilary Smith  
Invasive Species Coordinator  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Office of Policy Analysis, 3522 MIB, MS-3530  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Office: 202.208.4103  
Cell: 202.763.3118  
Fax: 202.208.4118  
[Hilary\\_Smith@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Hilary_Smith@ios.doi.gov)

**To:** Smith, Hilary[hilary\_smith@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Moody, Joan[joan\_moody@ios.doi.gov]; Laura Rigas[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Jamie Reaser[jamie\_reaser@ios.doi.gov]; Joel Clement[joel\_clement@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Cameron, Scott  
**Sent:** 2017-06-23T15:50:17-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: DRAFT DOI-WGA Release on Invasive Mussels  
**Received:** 2017-06-23T15:50:53-04:00

of course

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\_\_\_\_\_

[MJF1]Insert web link

[MJF2]Suggest name other basins and/or specify where the mussels already have invaded and where the spread of the species poses a threat in the West. Where in Montana have they been found?

1849 C Street, N.W.  
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[Hilary\\_Smith@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Hilary_Smith@ios.doi.gov)

**To:** heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Smith, Hilary  
**Sent:** 2017-06-26T09:13:13-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Out of Office Re: Reminder: Send changes this weekend on DRAFT DOI-WGA Release on Invasive Mussels  
**Received:** 2017-06-26T09:13:19-04:00

Thank you for your message. I am out of the office. For time sensitive issues, please contact Sarah Abdelrahim ([sarah\\_abdelrahim@ios.doi.gov](mailto:sarah_abdelrahim@ios.doi.gov)) and Joel Clement ([joel\\_clement@ios.doi.gov](mailto:joel_clement@ios.doi.gov)) for assistance.

All the best,  
Hilary

--

Hilary Smith  
Invasive Species Coordinator  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Office of Policy Analysis, 3522 MIB, MS-3530  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
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[Hilary\\_Smith@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Hilary_Smith@ios.doi.gov)

**To:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Ebbs, Stephanie  
**Sent:** 2017-07-19T17:08:21-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Joel Clement column in Washington Post  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T08:23:16-04:00

Hi Heather,

Do you have any response to Joel Clement's column in the Washington Post today? Any additional context about the reassignments would be helpful.

Thank you

Stephanie Ebbs

ABC News-Washington

(news desk) 202-222-7700

(cell) 202-875-4377

@stephebbs

**To:** Ebbs, Stephanie[Stephanie.Ebbs@abc.com]  
**From:** Heather Swift  
**Sent:** 2017-07-19T17:31:48-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Joel Clement column in Washington Post  
**Received:** 2017-07-19T18:41:10-04:00

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The Senior Executive Service is a class of managers who are specially trained to tackle top priority projects across the federal government. These are the highest paid executives in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work at a different agency at any time. These managers are meant to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different projects rather than maintain the same job for years.

Personnel moves amongst the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations through matching Senior Executive skill sets with mission and operational requirements.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 19, 2017, at 5:09 PM, Ebbs, Stephanie <[Stephanie.Ebbs@abc.com](mailto:Stephanie.Ebbs@abc.com)> wrote:

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**To:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Ebbs, Stephanie  
**Sent:** 2017-07-19T17:37:10-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Joel Clement column in Washington Post  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T00:06:37-04:00

Thanks for your fast response!

Just to clarify, Clement was classified as Senior Executive Service, were all the employees reassigned last month also SES?

Do you have any response to his comments that his reassignment was retaliation for his comments on climate change?

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**Sent:** Wednesday, July 19, 2017 5:31:48 PM  
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**To:** Ebbs, Stephanie[Stephanie.Ebbs@abc.com]  
**From:** Heather Swift  
**Sent:** 2017-07-19T17:39:23-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Joel Clement column in Washington Post  
**Received:** 2017-07-19T18:40:51-04:00

No not all SES were reassigned.

Sent from my iPhone

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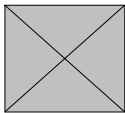
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**To:** Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Interior Press[interior\_press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Ben Geman  
**Sent:** 2017-07-19T20:53:51-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Hey can you guys please send the statement on Joel Clement?  
**Received:** 2017-07-19T20:54:56-04:00

--

Thanks,



**Ben Geman**  
ENERGY REPORTER  
[ben@axios.com](mailto:ben@axios.com) | 202.271.4190

**To:** heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro Energy  
**Sent:** 2017-07-20T05:44:20-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Morning Energy, presented by Growth Energy: DOE, Interior picks get confirmation hearings today — Simpson frustrated over appropriations process — Aliso Canyon gets clean bill of health  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T05:45:19-04:00

By Anthony Adragna | 07/20/2017 05:42 AM EDT

*With help from Alex Guillén and Nick Juliano*

**NOMINEES GET THEIR DAY IN COMMITTEE:** Six key Energy and Interior nominees get their day before Senate Energy and Natural Resources today. Ranking member [Maria Cantwell](#) told ME "there are people there who are trying to run science organizations without science backgrounds, so we'll have to dig into that" but declined to weigh in on difficulties the nominees might encounter from her side. A quick review of who's who:

— **Susan Combs, nominee for assistant secretary for policy, management and budget at Interior:** A long-time Texas politician, Combs served two terms as state comptroller after a stint as agriculture commissioner. She [pledged](#) to divest her interests in ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips and recuse herself from related issues if confirmed.

— **Douglas Domenech, nominee for assistant secretary for insular affairs at Interior:** He served deputy chief of staff and White House liaison to two secretaries of the interior during the George W. Bush administration, but look for Democrats to question his time as director of the Fueling Freedom Project at the Texas Public Policy Foundation, which [described itself](#) as an effort to "secure interstate compacts in order to restore state authority over electric generation and environmental regulations." He [resigned](#) from his position at the TPPF in January and pledged to divest in his interests in Chevron Corp. and Freeport-McMoRan Inc. within 90 days.

— **Brenda Burman, nominee to run the Bureau of Reclamation:** During the Bush administration, she was deputy commissioner for reclamation and assistant secretary for water and science and now directs water strategy at the Salt River Project.

— **Mark Menezes, nominee for undersecretary at DOE:** The vice president for federal relations at Berkshire Hathaway Energy also used to head Hunton & Williams' energy practice group. Menezes [pledged](#) to divest from a long list of investments and resign his current position if confirmed.

— **Paul Dabbar, nominee for undersecretary for science at DOE:** Dabbar is currently managing director for mergers and acquisitions at JPMorgan Chase. The former submarine officer also [committed](#) to drop his JPMorgan stock, as well as various other investments, after confirmation.

— **David Jonas, nominee to be general counsel at DOE:** Jonas, a partner at the Virginia law firm Fluett, Huber and Hoang since 2016, formerly did stints as general counsel for the National

Nuclear Security Administration and then for the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

**If you go:** The hearing kicks off at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 366. More information [here](#).

**ZINKE'S NO. 2 FACES KEY VOTE:** David Bernhardt's nomination for Interior Department deputy secretary faces a key procedural test today at 1:45 p.m. after the Senate votes on John K. Bush's appeals court nomination. Look for a final vote on the Bernhardt nomination to come on Monday unless Democrats waive back time this afternoon.

**WELCOME TO THURSDAY!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and House Energy and Commerce's Rick Kessler was first to identify Sen. Hattie Caraway as the first woman to preside over the Senate. For today: Prior to Trump, who was the most recent president without a pet? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning\\_Energy](#), and [@POLITICOPro](#).

**SIMPSON FRUSTRATED WITH APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS:** House leadership failed to give senior appropriators adequate time to convince reticent GOP colleagues to support individual spending packages and moved onto a hybrid "security-bus" bill too quickly, frustrated energy spending chief [Mike Simpson](#) said Wednesday. "We worked very hard and put in a lot of late nights to get all these bills done, and we did exactly what our conference wanted us to do," the Idaho Republican said. "We should have an opportunity to convince our colleagues that this is a good thing, that they should vote for these." Instead, GOP leaders will move a national security "mini-bus," including Simpson's [energy and water title](#), next week. But exasperated by the process, he declared himself "undecided" on the measure while acknowledging he was "trying to send a message more than anything else."

**Bearish on the fate of the other bills:** Simpson thought next week's bill would get across the finish line, but he wasn't sure about other measures, including the Interior-EPA spending package. "I'd be surprised if we're able to pass the rest of those bills in September," he said. "I think you're going to do at least a short-term CR and we'll see how long."

**Litany of amendments coming:** Lawmakers will likely to seek to restore funding through amendments to their preferred DOE programs (ARPA-E, anyone?) on the floor next week, though the "problem is, where do you take the money out from," Simpson said. He also anticipated efforts to strip out riders on items like the Waters of the U.S. regulation. [Dina Titus](#), for example, [tweeted](#) she was "drafting amendments to fight Yucca Mountain funding in the House appropriations bill & stop this unworkable project."

**NOTE:** The Senate Appropriations Committee today [considers](#) its Energy & Water Development package during a business meeting at 10:30 a.m.

**SULLIVAN'S CHIEF PICKED FOR INTERIOR SLOT:** Trump announced Wednesday he'd picked Joseph Balash, Sen. [Dan Sullivan](#)'s chief-of-staff, to serve as Interior's assistant secretary for land and mineral management. Prior to coming to Capitol Hill, Balash was deputy commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources from 2010 to 2013 and advised two governors on natural resources policy before that.

**EVERY STUDY HAS A STORY:** Critics are focusing on the give-and-take between the DOE

career staff and the Trump appointees in the much-anticipated electric grid study ordered by Secretary Rick Perry, but the effort could be just as susceptible to some of the institutional fault lines between the DOE offices devoted to competing energy sources, Pro's Darius Dixon [reports](#). "Two people in two different offices right next to each other might disagree on significant energy issues, and that's how they ended up in those different offices," said Greg Gershuny, who served as chief of staff in DOE's Energy Policy and Systems Analysis office during the Obama administration.

**'False narrative':** At least one career staffer close to the process of producing the study told Darius the editing process for the grid study isn't all that different from previous DOE studies. "It's a false narrative," the person said of the criticism that the report was likely to be skewed to favor coal. "They should know better about us professional staff, and I'm personally insulted." Travis Fisher, the Trump political appointee overseeing the effort, told Darius the agency did not enter into the study with any preconceived notions. "We're just on a fact-finding mission. It's curious that folks have assumed the worst," he said. Perry's comments on whether renewable power policies were hurting baseload power and the administration's focus on coal has made that a tough sell for its critics.

**\*\* A message from Growth Energy:** The Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act provides a simple and long-overdue RVP fix that will improve air quality, lower prices at the pump, and level the playing field for homegrown biofuels in markets where drivers want it. [The solution is clear: Congress must act.](#) \*\*

**PRUITT BUCKS WHITE HOUSE IN MINNESOTA:** EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt broke with the White House and called for continued funding for the cleanup of the Great Lakes during a swing through Minnesota on Wednesday. "I understand the investment that's been made historically," he said during an interview with the [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#). "It's a continuing need and we have to see that it's adequately funded." Pruitt also seemed to move back his time frame for a rewrite of the Waters of the U.S. regulation to the first quarter of 2018. He also met with [local citizens](#) on that controversial regulation and [Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton](#).

**ALISO GETS CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH:** California engineering and safety enforcement experts concluded Wednesday the Aliso Canyon natural gas storage facility is safe to operate and can reopen at a greatly reduced capacity. "In order to protect public safety and the environment, this facility will be held to the most rigorous monitoring, inspection and safety requirements in the nation and will store only the minimum gas necessary to supply the Los Angeles area," Ken Harris, a state official, said in a statement. That site, ME readers likely remember, leaked natural gas for months before being permanently capped.

**SOUND THE ALARM:** Former Interior Office of Policy Analysis Director Joel Clement has filed a whistleblower complaint against the agency after he was transferred from a leadership position focused on climate change to a job collecting oil and gas royalties, Pro's Esther Whieldon and Ben Lefebvre [report](#). In a [complaint](#) and [disclosure](#) filing with the Office of Special Counsel and in a Washington Post [op-ed](#), Clement called his transfer a push to an stop him from publicly discussing climate change impacts on native Alaskan coastal communities.

**BISHOP: ZINKE 'MISERABLE' WITHOUT SUPPORT:** House Natural Resources

Chairman Rob Bishop and Zinke spent a flight across the aisle from each other (in coach!) last weekend and the Utah congressman they discussed how "miserable his life is over there" without more confirmed appointees. "He needs some bodies to help him out there," Bishop told reporters. "He's doing a lot of stuff himself and that can't be all that easy."

**What else:** Zinke was flying out to Oregon to tour the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument so the two men discussed the monument review, as well as sage grouse issues, according to Bishop. "He's actually much more open now than he was when he was a member," Bishop quipped.

**It's about time:** Bishop expressed relief the Senate was finally about ready to approve Bernhardt's nomination to be Zinke's No. 2. "There are a whole lot of problems that could be solved if Bernhardt was there now," he said. "The Senate waiting as long as they have is simply wrong."

**CLARK GETS COMMITTEE VOTE:** Jeffrey Bossert Clark, Trump's selection to run the DOJ's environmental division, gets a committee vote today at 9:30 a.m. in the Senate Judiciary Committee. ME readers may remember Clark clashed with Democrats over his views on climate change during his confirmation hearing, pointedly telling Sen. Dianne Feinstein his "personal views aren't relevant" to how he would perform his duties. Before re-joining DOJ, Clark was a long-time partner at Kirkland & Ellis.

**TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TAKES STOCK:** The White House Office of Management and Budget this morning will release an overdue compendium showing its withdrawn or postponed hundreds of Obama-era regulations, POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia reports. "Government is using muscles it hasn't used in a really long time, exposing and removing redundant and unnecessary regulation," OMB Director Mick Mulvaney said in a statement. Today's release of the "Unified Agenda" adds "deregulatory actions" to its name and mission and shows the Trump administration has shelved about 860 regulatory actions, either withdrawing them or moving them from "active status."

**PIPELINE BILLS CLEAR HOUSE:** Two bills designed to streamline permitting for pipelines and other energy infrastructure passed the House late Wednesday, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. H.R. 2910 (115), which passed 248-179, would give FERC more sway over environmental reviews of interstate natural gas pipelines and require better coordination among various agencies involved in the process. The other bill, H.R. 2883 (115), would place permitting authority for cross-border oil pipelines with FERC and give the Energy Department authority over permitting for electrical transmission after eliminating the State Department's authority to permit pipelines or electric transmission projects that cross the U.S. border. That measure cleared the chamber 254-175.

**MAIL CALL! WE NEED MORE TIME!** Twenty-two Senate Democrats, led by Tom Carper, sent a letter to EPA and the Army Corps asking for a 90-day extension for their proposal to rescind the 2015 waters of the U.S. regulation. "As you know, EPA and the Corps of Engineers extended the comment period twice in response to requests to do so, resulting in over 180 days of input," they wrote. "It makes no sense to deny affected and concerned Americans the same opportunity to weigh in on your proposal to rescind that rule."

**QUIET DAY, GUYS?** Lots of surprise Cabinet sightings Wednesday: First, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke [tweeted](#) at 12:30 p.m. he just finished up a run. (ME notes the heat index was more than 100 degrees at the time.) That prompted Zinke to [shoot back](#) at your ME author "midday necessary. didn't have enough morning energy." Well-played, sir, well-played.

**Perry too:** Pro's eagle-eyed Ben Lefebvre spotted Energy Secretary Rick Perry on an early afternoon Capitol tour with Rep. [Louie Gohmert](#). Pics [here](#) and [here](#).

**MORE SPOTTED:** Months after his group [pushed the Trump administration](#) to select Zinke for Interior, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers' leader Land Tawney [tweeted](#) a picture with Sen. [Jon Tester](#), who lost a likely reelection opponent with Zinke's pick. "Doing our best to emulate the great Mike Mansfield," he added.

**COURT SAYS FEDS ON HOOK FOR SOME COSTS AT SUPERFUND SITE:** The federal government can be held partly liable for a New Mexico Superfund site because the longtime molybdenum mine was located on national forest lands, the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals [ruled](#) Wednesday. The operator of the [Questa mine](#), Chevron Mining, argued that the government should help pay for a cleanup. The 10th Circuit agreed, reversing a lower court and ruling that the Interior and Agriculture Departments qualify as an "owner," a Superfund classification that can obligate a party to pay for clean-ups. The court did not take a position on the government's actual liability in this case, saying it could be zero, but the matter was left to a lower court to work out. The now-closed Questa mining site has led to acidic, metal-tainted discharge into local waters. The Obama administration last year reached a \$143 million [deal](#) with the company to clean up the site and reimburse EPA for past work. It's not immediately clear how the 10th Circuit's ruling affects that.

**ASSESSING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF TRUMP ON SCIENCE:** The Union of Concerned Scientists this morning is out with [a report](#) documenting what it says are "multiple actions by his administration [that] are eroding the ability of science, facts, and evidence to inform policy decisions." Among the trends they're seeing: Failure to fill key scientific roles, appointing individuals with conflicts to those spots that are filled and reducing public access to scientific information.

**HOLLYWOOD COMES TO DC:** Al Gore's new climate change documentary, "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power," had its D.C. premier Wednesday night at the Newseum, with plenty of Democratic members of Congress and top environmental activists in the audience. The film picks up about where "An Inconvenient Truth" left off and documents Gore's activism in the run-up to the 2015 Paris conference. In brief remarks before the screening, Gore acknowledged House Minority Leader [Nancy Pelosi](#) in the audience and said "I really hope you become speaker again." An audience member shouted, "2020, run!" but Gore indicated that wasn't likely to be in his plans. At one point in the movie, he reprises his old line about being a "recovering politician" unlikely to relapse the longer he stays away.

**Spotted:** Along with Gore and Pelosi, the audience included Sens. [Bill Nelson](#), [Jeff Merkley](#), [Jeanne Shaheen](#) and [Sheldon Whitehouse](#); former Sen. Barbara Mikulski; and Reps. [Steny Hoyer](#), [Suzanne Bonamici](#), [Danny Davis](#), [Debbie Dingell](#), [Alan Lowenthal](#), [Carolyn Maloney](#), [Jim McGovern](#), [Tom O'Halleran](#), [Tom Suozzi](#), [Paul Tonko](#) and [Steve Cohen](#). ME also ran into

NRDC's David Doniger and LCV's Gene Karpinski among the environmentalists filling the packed auditorium.

**MOVER, SHAKER!** Matthew Thurlow has joined BakerHostetler as a partner on the environmental team in the litigation group; he was previously litigator for the Environmental Enforcement Section of the United States Department of Justice.

## QUICK HITS

- BOR acting commissioner tours Basin. [Herald & News](#).
- SolarCity co-founder Peter Rive to quit Tesla. [Reuters](#).
- Nuns with chapel on land as pipeline protest sue regulators. [AP](#).
- Justice Department expected to drop \$3 million Harley-Davidson emissions penalty: sources. [Reuters](#).
- How Y2K Offers a Lesson for Fighting Climate Change. [New York Times](#).
- DEP seeks federal approval of WV water pollution law change. [Charleston Gazette-Mail](#).

## HAPPENING TODAY

9:00 a.m. — "[Seeking Innovative Solutions for the Future of Hardrock Mining](#)," House Natural Resources Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee, Longworth 1324

9:30 a.m. — Executive [Business Meeting](#) to consider nominations, including Jeffrey Clark's, Senate Judiciary Committee, Dirksen 226

10:00 a.m. — Full committee [hearing](#) on various nominations, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Dirksen 366

10:00 a.m. — "[Innovative Financing and Funding: Addressing America's Crumbling Water Infrastructure](#)," Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife, Dirksen 406

10:30 a.m. — Senate Appropriations Committee [considers](#) Energy and Water Development bill, Dirksen 106.

## THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**\*\* A message from Growth Energy:** The solution to cleaner, homegrown fuels is just one decision away. By fixing outdated Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) regulations, Congress will give Americans the freedom to choose cleaner-burning, less expensive biofuel blends and lift regulatory burdens on local fuel retailers so they can offer drivers better options year-round. This vital market incentivizes innovation and investment in advanced biofuel technologies while reducing our dependence on foreign fossil fuels and lowering our carbon footprint. The solution is The Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act. [A fix that is good for consumers, retailers and](#)



our planet. \*\*

*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/07/doe-interior-picks-get-confirmation-hearings-today-023831>

## **Stories from POLITICO Pro**

### **Perry's controversial grid study could reflect DOE factions** [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 07/19/2017 05:25 PM EDT

The controversy around the Energy Department's much-anticipated study of the electric grid is being portrayed as a skirmish between career staff and President Donald Trump's political appointees, but it could be just as susceptible to the fault lines between the DOE offices devoted to competing energy sources.

The study ordered by Secretary Rick Perry drew criticism before work had even begun because of Perry's premise that federal renewable power incentives may be "prematurely" pushing baseload power plants into retirement. That characterization by Perry, who [also said](#) he didn't think CO2 is driving climate change, drew rebukes from renewable power supporters and analysts who saw the study as a ruse to justify efforts to support coal-fired power plants.

Those critics have been emboldened by the leak of [a draft](#) containing language that said wind and solar power posed no threat to the reliability of the power grid — language DOE says is no longer in the latest version.

"All of our concerns have been that the study is to support a predetermined outcome and that facts that don't support that narrative aren't going to be included in the study," said John Moore, who directs a project at Natural Resources Defense Council to integrate clean energy into the grid. "While we're probably still another draft or two away from the final report, culling facts that don't support the narrative is obviously a concern and maybe not that surprising."

Though some observers have focused on whether there was conflict between political and career staff, some officials say the agency has long fostered a natural contest of ideas among the career staff across its program offices, regardless of who occupies the secretary's suite.

"Two people in two different offices right next to each other might disagree on significant energy issues, and that's how they ended up in those different offices," said Greg Gershuny, who served as chief of staff in DOE's Energy Policy and Systems Analysis office during the Obama administration.

And with the White House and Congress pressing to shrink the agency's budget, the normal intra-agency competition may be heightened.

"In an era where OMB is putting out significant cuts to programs across the board, all programs are going to be protecting the important research that they've been doing even if it comes at the expense of other programs," he added.

Gershuny, who worked on former Secretary Ernest Moniz's first Quadrennial Energy Review — a massive study of infrastructure that took a year to produce — said there can often be policy and academic divisions inside a single office, like the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy section.

"Even within EERE, we'd get contrary comments between two different offices," he said. "The solar office might give us different comments than the wind office, or something like that. And that's just them protecting their turf."

But the controversy around Perry's electric grid study has generated an overtly political cloud given the Trump administration's rollback of the Obama climate change policies and the president's promise to revive the U.S. coal industry.

Joe Romm, climate editor at the liberal news website ThinkProgress, [posted](#) a copy of DOE's draft report this week, saying it would enable the public to compare a staff version to the "final 'politically-approved' version." Romm, a Clinton-era DOE official, added: "It is widely feared Perry's team of Trump appointees will simply erase the study's inconvenient truths before [its] final report is released to the public."

But at least one career staffer close to the process of producing the study said the accusations from critics were overblown, and that the editing process isn't all that different from previous DOE studies.

"It's a false narrative," the person said of the criticism. "But that narrative fits that agenda. ... They should know better about us professional staff, and I'm personally insulted."

The employee said that the vast majority of the edits on the grid study have been done by career employees across EERE, EPSA, the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, and DOE's fossil fuel and nuclear energy offices. They also said that they had not seen interference from Travis Fisher, a Trump political appointee who criticized renewable energy while working at the right-leaning Institute for Energy Research. Perry put Fisher in charge of shepherding the study.

Fisher told POLITICO recently that DOE did not enter into the study with any preconceived notions. "We're just on a fact-finding mission. It's curious that folks have assumed the worst," he said.

Significant changes were being made to the summary in the leaked draft that found no threat to reliability from renewables, the staffer said, because it lacked "nuance" and was filled with too many "declarative" statements compiled by a single contractor employee without broad agency input.

"Often what happens is there might be a kernel of truth in what one side says, and a kernel of truth in what the other said, and you put them both together," the person said.

For many at DOE who helped produce the two voluminous Quadrennial Energy Review reports, the new study is a fairly thin project, but it has nonetheless taken weeks longer than the initial due date Perry called for when he asked for it in April.

Although the career staffer, who has been at the agency under four presidents, said the editing process for the current report hasn't been particularly contentious between program offices, such philosophical tensions wouldn't be unusual for DOE.

Current and former DOE officials are quick to note how EERE and the agency's electricity office can often find themselves at odds.

"Whether it's the QER or something like [the new grid study], there's a very well-known fight just between the Office of Electricity and EERE," one former DOE official said.

"EERE folks tend to think the OE guys are old and haven't been in the private sector recently and are still operating on outdated information. The OE guys think that the EERE guys only care about renewables, and don't pay attention to resiliency," the former official said. "More importantly, there's the actual jurisdiction conflict sometimes over who's actually responsible for grid integration. Clearly, OE is responsible for reliability but integration is all over the map."

Peter Lyons, a Republican who served as DOE's top nuclear energy official in the Obama administration, said that he and his counterpart in EERE had been determined to "get out of the mode where [nuclear] and renewables are calling each other names, and renewables claiming they can do everything."

In fact, he said, the office he had the most difficulty with was DOE's multibillion-dollar Office of Science.

"Science didn't particularly want advice from anybody," Lyons said.

Oftentimes, tensions at DOE can arise thanks to the tight budgets imposed by Capitol Hill or the White House.

"These are human beings," said Lynn Orr, a former Obama undersecretary for science and energy at DOE overseeing many of those program offices. "They're excited about what they're working on, and they think it's important. They're all good at thinking up more cool stuff to do than we had managed to persuade Congress to support."

Every office may have its own sense of how to solve a problem, he said. "And, in some sense, they can all be right."

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**Interior official files whistleblower complaint over job reassignment** [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon and Ben Lefebvre | 07/19/2017 07:06 PM EDT

A former senior Interior Department official has filed a whistleblower complaint after the agency transferred him from a leadership position focused on climate change to a desk job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies.

In a [complaint](#) and [disclosure](#) filing with the Office of Special Counsel and in a Washington Post [op-ed](#), former Interior Office of Policy Analysis Director Joel Clement claimed he was [reassigned](#) to a position at the Office of Natural Resources Revenue to stop him from publicly discussing climate change impacts on native Alaskan coastal communities.

Clement was among dozens of senior executive staff reassigned to other jobs in June.

Clement told POLITICO no Interior political staffers ever raised concerns about his activities prior to his reassignment. "It was kind of obvious to reassign the climate adaptation experts to the accounting office where they collect fossil fuel royalty checks. That was pretty flagrant, I would say, in terms of sending the message. So that message was received loud and clear that they wanted me to quit."

Clement said he'd like his old job back, and he hoped other staff would also complain.

Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said the personnel moves were "conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations."

Clement may have difficulty proving his case because agencies have wide discretion to reassign staff, according to Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. "It sounds like he's being retaliated against because of his job, not because of any disclosure he made," Ruch said. "He's suffering due to the nature of his job, and maybe because he did it too well."

*Annie Snider contributed to this report.*

*To view online [click here](#).*

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## **DOJ environment nominee tussles with Feinstein on climate change [Back](#)**

By Alex Guillén | 06/28/2017 11:15 AM EDT

Jeffrey Bossert Clark, President Donald Trump's pick to run the Justice Department's environmental division, declined multiple times today to say whether he thinks greenhouse gases pose a threat to human health or welfare.

At a confirmation hearing today, Clark told Sen. [Dianne Feinstein](#) (D-Calif.) that he stands by his past [criticism](#) of EPA's 2009 endangerment finding on economic grounds, and he noted that the Supreme Court put the Clean Power Plan on hold last year in part "because it would have worked a fundamental transformation of how the power sector is regulated."

However, Clark declined to answer Feinstein's questions about whether he agrees with the scientific consensus that human activity is the main driver of climate change. Clark said his "personal views aren't relevant" and such issues are a matter for EPA and other agencies.

"I want to know what your beliefs are and I think we're entitled to it before I cast my vote," replied Feinstein, the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee.

"What my beliefs are is fidelity to the law and then respect for the facts as they're found by the agency," Clark said. "If an agency makes a decision that's within the bounds of the Constitution and within the bounds of statutory law ... then that's owed a defense."

Feinstein then asked whether Clark believes climate change poses economic risks.

"I have seen economic studies that indicate that climate change could cause negative effects, yes," he replied.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The Judiciary Committee will vote on Clark's nomination sometime after it returns from next week's Independence Day recess.

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**White House to trumpet early success in wiping out regulations** [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 07/19/2017 09:19 PM EDT

The White House is preparing Thursday to release its first official scorecard on the administration's progress in taking a wrecking ball to Barack Obama's regulatory legacy — perhaps the greatest success so far of Donald Trump's young presidency.

Trump's agencies have withdrawn or postponed hundreds of regulatory actions that the Obama administration had in the works late in 2016, the Office of Management and Budget said Wednesday as it prepared to release a compendium of their rulemaking activity to date.

OMB also boasted that the new administration has proposed astronomically fewer rules than Obama did during his early days in office. And it estimated that Trump's regulatory actions through last month will reduce economic burdens by \$22 million a year — in contrast with more than \$3 billion in annual burdens that Obama's agencies had imposed as of the same point in 2009.

The White House hasn't yet released its full data, making those estimates impossible to check. But Trump has made it clear that erasing regulations is one of the prime missions he has set for his administration. And unlike his proposals for repealing Obamacare, restricting immigration, rewriting the tax code or building a border wall, his deregulatory agenda has faced little resistance in Congress or the courts so far.

With Trump's legislative agenda stalled, administration officials are increasingly looking toward deregulation as an issue they can sell to his base ahead of the midterm elections.

"Government is using muscles it hasn't used in a really long time, exposing and removing redundant and unnecessary regulation," OMB Director Mick Mulvaney said in a statement.

Liberals have been increasingly dismayed by Trump's anti-regulation push, however.

"He's done tremendous damage," Rena Steinzor, a University of Maryland law professor who has tracked regulations for decades, [told POLITICO](#) in May. "I've been watching through six presidents, and all that pales in comparison to this."

The product that OMB is scheduled to release Thursday is the Trump administration's first update of the "[Unified Agenda](#)," a twice-a-year compilation of planned or expected regulatory actions across the executive branch.

The agenda normally attracts little attention from the media or the public, but Trump has scrambled the recipe by adding "deregulatory actions" to its name and mission. A more complete version of the Unified Agenda will be released in the fall, when agencies may have a better handle on how to carry out Trump's policies — including a mandate that they repeal two regulations for every new one they propose.

The Obama White House's final Unified Agenda included more than 3,300 regulatory actions, including 193 it deemed "economically significant."

In contrast, OMB said the Trump administration has shelved about 860 regulatory actions, either withdrawing them or moving them from "active status." Those include 469 regulatory actions that agencies have withdrawn altogether.

Trump's agencies have also proposed just 58 "economically significant" regulations, down about half from Obama's last year in office. The White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs defines an economically significant regulation as a rule that could have an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more.

Agencies have also taken at least 16 "deregulatory actions," according to OMB. Those include late Obama-era regulations that Trump wiped out with a stroke of a pen after Congress voted to block them during his first few months as president.

While the White House's latest numbers are new, Trump has made little secret of his anti-regulation crusade. His best-known targets have included Obama administration regulations limiting greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, requiring restaurants to list calories on their menus and barring some mentally ill people from buying guns.

But OMB says much more is in the works. For example, it said, the Department of Transportation is preparing to offer passenger railroads "greater flexibility" in meeting crashworthiness standards, while the Labor Department will streamline approvals for apprenticeship programs and the EPA will abandon "a costly and premature plan to regulate oil and gas development" on certain Indian reservations.

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**House passes pair of pipeline bills** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 07/19/2017 06:02 PM EDT

The House today passed a pair of bills designed to streamline permitting for pipelines and other energy infrastructure.

Lawmakers voted 248-179 in favor of [H.R. 2910 \(115\)](#), which would give FERC more sway over environmental reviews of interstate natural gas pipelines and require better coordination among various agencies involved in the process. Sponsored by Rep. [Bill Flores](#) (R-Texas), the bill directs other state and federal agencies and tribal governments to defer to FERC's decisions about what to include in those reviews and tells FERC to set deadlines for them to provide input.

Similar language is included in the Senate's bipartisan energy bill, [S. 1460 \(115\)](#), which is awaiting action in the upper chamber. Last year's wide-ranging energy bills, [H.R. 8 \(114\)](#) and [S. 2012 \(114\)](#), also included such a provision. However, last year's version of the language said other agencies "may" defer to FERC; this year's says they "shall" do so to the maximum extent possible.

The House also voted 254-175 today to pass [H.R. 2883 \(115\)](#), which would eliminate the State Department's authority to permit pipelines or electric transmission projects that cross the U.S. border. That has been a goal for Republicans since the State Department, under former President Barack Obama, denied a cross-border permit to Keystone XL, but previous versions of the bill died in the Senate after passing the House.

The bill from Rep. [Markwayne Mullin](#) (R-Okla.) would place permitting authority for cross-border oil pipelines with FERC and give the Energy Department authority over permitting for electrical transmission.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The bills now head to the Senate. A larger, bipartisan energy bill awaiting floor action in the upper chamber includes language addressing interstate natural-gas pipelines but not cross-border infrastructure.

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**Tester ally pushed Zinke for Interior secretary** [Back](#)

By Kevin Robillard | 12/14/2016 07:20 PM EDT

An ally of Sen. [Jon Tester](#) (D-Mont.) proved influential in President-elect Donald Trump's decision to tap GOP Rep. [Ryan Zinke](#) as Interior secretary — a decision that will take Zinke out of contention for a planned run against Tester in 2018 if Zinke accepts the job, sources say.

Donald Trump Jr., an avid hunter and a lifetime member of the group Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, [was involved in](#) the interview process for Interior secretary and cited information from the group, a source familiar with the process said. A PAC and nonprofit run by Backcountry Hunters and Anglers' leader, Land Tawney, spent millions helping Tester win reelection in 2012.

The sportsmen's group backed Zinke for the Cabinet post since and took a hard line against Rep. [Cathy McMorris Rodgers](#) (R-Wash.), another candidate for the position, in press releases issued

in recent weeks. The Associated Press reported that Montana GOP Sen. Steve Daines also recommended Zinke to Trump, Jr. while he was in Montana on a hunting trip last month. But the source familiar with the meeting between Trump and McMorris Rodgers said the president-elect's son "repeatedly" and "consistently" brought up Backcountry Hunters and Anglers' opposition to her appointment. (Trump's transition team did not respond to a request for comment.)

"Representative McMorris Rodgers' track record in Congress should raise a red flag for Americans who care about the responsible management of our public lands and waters," Tawney said in a recent statement. "President-elect Trump has pledged to keep public lands in public hands, and American sportsmen expect him to be true to his word."

Tawney was also quoted praising Zinke or opposing McMorris Rodgers in the Washington Post and other publications.

In a phone interview, Tawney said his past support for Tester — one of several endangered Democratic senators up for reelection in red states in 2018 — played no role in his group's decision to oppose McMorris Rodgers or praise Zinke. Tawney said he planned on supporting Tester's reelection in 2018, but "I'll do it as a private citizen," he said.

Tawney said his group got involved because of Zinke's opposition to selling of public lands — he removed himself from a GOP platform committee that endorsed transferring federal lands to the state — which he says compares favorably to McMorris Rodgers.

"It's just a coincidence that has nothing to do with our stance," Tawney said of his ties to Tester. He noted 70 percent of sportsmen in the West use public lands for hunting and fishing. "This is our second Second Amendment. This is the line you do not cross."

Tawney said he had discussed public lands issues with Trump Jr. in the past, although he didn't talk to him during the Interior secretary selection process. But Tawney said he saw Trump Jr.'s thinking both his father's Interior pick and a speech the elder Trump gave in North Carolina after the election, in which he promised to continue Teddy Roosevelt's legacy and "conserve and protect our beautiful natural resources for the next generation including protecting lands."

"I think Junior has some influence on these issues," Tawney said.

Republicans took a more cynical view of Tawney's role.

"It seems to me that Tester hoodwinked everyone here," a senior Republican Senate strategist said.

Democrats said Republicans were crafting a conspiracy theory to explain Trump's decision.

"It's laughable and ridiculous," a Democratic strategist said.

Supporters of McMorris Rodgers also said the Backcountry group mischaracterized her position during the search for Interior prospects. The legislation cited to say McMorris Rodgers supports selling off federal lands was proposed in 2011, and would have sold off about 3.3 million acres



of federal lands that the Obama administration had indicated were ready for sale. The bill explicitly prohibited the sale of land being used for recreational purposes. McMorris Rodgers didn't cosponsor the legislation in either of the last two Congresses. But Backcountry Hunters was far from the only conservation or sportsmen's group to oppose her nomination.

Zinke has yet to accept the Interior job, but the Senate Republican strategist said the 55-year-old former Navy SEAL was fully expected to run against Tester in 2018. He had been meeting with operatives to plan a Senate since the spring, with conversations becoming more serious over the summer and after the election, the strategist said. An internal poll taken in the past month had shown Zinke tied with Tester.

It's unclear who Republicans would run against Tester if Zinke accepts the nomination. But the party has options: With the exception of the gubernatorial race, Republicans won every statewide election in Montana this November. Tester is almost certain to face a tough reelection bid in a state Trump won by more than 20 percentage points.

Tawney has a track record of boosting Tester opponents in ways that rebounded to the Democratic senator's benefit.

His pro-Tester groups in 2012, called Montana Hunters and Anglers, mostly backed Tester and attacked GOP Rep. Denny Rehberg. One ad hit "[Rehberg's land grab](#)" and claimed he supported giving the Department of Homeland Security total control of federal lands within 100 miles of the Canadian border.

But another [ad](#) urged voters to back Libertarian Dan Cox and called him, not Rehberg, "the real conservative" in the race. Cox ultimately earned 6 percent of the vote as Tester defeated Rehberg by 4 percentage points.

Tester, for his part, heaped praise on Trump's selection of Zinke to lead the Department of the Interior.

"I want to congratulate Congressman Zinke on this high honor," he said. "I'm pleased the President-elect nominated someone from the west for a post that's critically important to Montana's outdoor economy and way of life. I look forward to sitting down with Congressman Zinke to discuss how we can increase public access to public land, protect our Constitutional right to clean air and water, and uphold our trust responsibilities to Indian Country."

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Hey Heather,  
Could I get a statement on the Joel Clement op-ed that was published in the Washington Post yesterday ASAP?

Thanks,

Tim Pearce  
Reporter  
Daily Caller News Foundation  
(575) 420-4736

**To:** Timothy Pearce[timothy@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-20T10:00:47-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Media Request  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T10:01:34-04:00

**Regarding the op-ed:**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

**Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

-

Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

On Thu, Jul 20, 2017 at 9:07 AM, Timothy Pearce <[timothy@dailycallernewsfoundation.org](mailto:timothy@dailycallernewsfoundation.org)> wrote:

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**To:** Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Timothy Pearce  
**Sent:** 2017-07-20T10:02:20-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Media Request  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T10:02:36-04:00

Thanks!

On Thu, Jul 20, 2017 at 10:00 AM, Swift, Heather <[heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

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Tim Pearce  
Agriculture Reporter  
Daily Caller News Foundation  
(575) 420-4736

**To:** Hinson, Alex[alex\_hinson@ios.doi.gov]; Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Interior Press[interior\_press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Chris D'Angelo  
**Sent:** 2017-07-20T12:21:40-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Joel Clement  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T12:21:51-04:00

Hi Interior folks,  
Is Sec. Zinke/Interior Department commenting at this time on Joel Clement's op-ed in the Washington Post?

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/im-a-scientist-the-trump-administration-reassigned-me-for-speaking-up-about-climate-change/2017/07/19/389b8dce-6b12-11e7-9c15-177740635e83\\_story.html?hpid=hp\\_no-name\\_opinion-card-b%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm\\_term=.dff83aa668ab](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/im-a-scientist-the-trump-administration-reassigned-me-for-speaking-up-about-climate-change/2017/07/19/389b8dce-6b12-11e7-9c15-177740635e83_story.html?hpid=hp_no-name_opinion-card-b%3Ahomepage%2Fstory&utm_term=.dff83aa668ab)

**Chris D'Angelo**  
**Reporter, HuffPost**  
**Washington, DC**  
**m: 314-580-0191**  
**Twitter: @c\_m\_dangelo**  
**huffingtonpost.com/chris-dangelo/**

**To:** Colin S. Woodard[cwoodard@pressherald.com]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-20T14:44:52-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Interview request - Portland Press Herald  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T14:45:40-04:00

**Regarding the op-ed:**

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On Thu, Jul 20, 2017 at 11:46 AM, Colin S. Woodard <[cwoodard@pressherald.com](mailto:cwoodard@pressherald.com)> wrote:

Greetings -

I'm a reporter at Maine's largest paper and writing today on Joel Clement and his "whistleblower" OpEd. As you may know, he mentions being a Maine native at the end of the piece.

I'd like to speak to someone at DOI for a response to his allegations and also comment about the wisdom of reassigning various senior personnel to positions for which their expertise does not appear relevant. Can you help me with that?



Many thanks,

Colin

Colin Woodard  
State & National Affairs Writer  
*Portland Press Herald* and *Maine Sunday Telegram*  
207-317-6278

**To:** Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Colin S. Woodard  
**Sent:** 2017-07-20T14:50:06-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Interview request - Portland Press Herald  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T14:50:17-04:00

Thanks kindly.

CW

Sent from my mobile phone (so excuse brevity.)

On Jul 20, 2017, at 2:45 PM, Swift, Heather <[heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

**Regarding the op-ed:**

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Many thanks,

Colin

Colin Woodard  
State & National Affairs Writer  
*Portland Press Herald* and *Maine Sunday Telegram*  
207-317-6278

**To:** Kovski, Alan[akovski@bna.com]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-20T15:24:36-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: my email just in case  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T15:25:23-04:00

**Regarding the op-ed:**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

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On Thu, Jul 20, 2017 at 3:22 PM, Kovski, Alan <[akovski@bna.com](mailto:akovski@bna.com)> wrote:

Hi Alex,

In case there was any doubt about my email when I gave it to you over the phone:  
[akovski@bna.com](mailto:akovski@bna.com)

(For the response to that Post op-ed by Joel Clement ... and probably many future emails)

: . . . . .

**Alan Kovski**

Staff Reporter

**Bloomberg BNA**

Office: 703-341-3825

Cell: 571-319-7477

[akovski@bna.com](mailto:akovski@bna.com)

**To:** heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro Energy  
**Sent:** 2017-07-20T15:59:06-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Afternoon Energy, presented by Growth Energy: Exxon fined for violation under Tillerson — Breaking down the Unified Agenda — Senate approps approves spending bill  
**Received:** 2017-07-20T15:59:32-04:00

By Kelsey Tamborrino | 07/20/2017 03:57 PM EDT

*With help from Alex Guillén, Darius Dixon and Annie Snider*

**EXXON FINED FOR SANCTIONS VIOLATION:** The Treasury Department today fined Exxon Mobil \$2 million for "reckless disregard" related to U.S. sanctions against Russia in 2014 — when now-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was running the company. The department says that back in May 2014 — a month after the U.S. imposed sanctions against several Russians as punishment for annexing Crimea — Exxon executives signed eight legal documents with Igor Sechin related to oil and gas projects with Rosneft in Russia, Ben Lefebvre reports.

**The news puts Tillerson in an awkward position**, especially as the Trump administration is being probed for its potential Russian connections. Exxon, while under Tillerson's watch, pushed against the U.S. sanctions and still maintains a business office in the country, Ben writes. The oil giant has also asked for a waiver to continue the Arctic drilling project — a request that Treasury has denied. Tillerson testified in June that expanded sanctions would tie the State Department's hands in negotiating with Moscow.

**For its part, Exxon says the fine is "fundamentally unfair,"** saying the sanctions targeted Sechin as an individual and not in his role as head of Rosneft. "Exxon Mobil followed the clear guidance from the White House and Treasury when its representatives signed documents involving ongoing oil and gas activities with Rosneft," Exxon spokesman Alan Jeffers said, adding that Exxon would challenge the fine.

**Welcome to Afternoon Energy.** Welcome to a busy Thursday! I'm your host Kelsey Tamborrino. Send your thoughts, news and tips to [ktamborrino@politico.com](mailto:ktamborrino@politico.com), [mdaily@politico.com](mailto:mdaily@politico.com) and [njuliano@politico.com](mailto:njuliano@politico.com), and keep up with us on Twitter at [@kelseytam](https://twitter.com/kelseytam), [@dailym1](https://twitter.com/dailym1), [@nickjuliano](https://twitter.com/nickjuliano), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA:** The White House this morning released its first official scorecard on the administration's progress in taking down former President Barack Obama's regulatory legacy. POLITICO's Andrew Restuccia has an overview of what the Unified Agenda means for corporate interests and others here, and the Pro Energy team has spent the morning digging through the details at EPA and the Interior and Energy departments.

#### **EPA:**

— The Clean Power Plan should be revoked "on grounds that it exceeds the statutory authority provided under section 111 of the Clean Air Act," EPA has concluded in its review of the Obama-

era rule, according to a new [notice](#). EPA's proposed rule withdrawing the Clean Power Plan has been under review at OMB since June 8, but the Unified Agenda does not provide a target date for its release, Alex Guillén [reports](#).

— Another [listing](#) indicates the agency plans to put the proposed rewrite of the Waters of the U.S. rule out for public comment in December. Annie Snider with more [here](#).

— And EPA says in another [update](#) that it hopes to finalize in August its two-year suspension of enforcement of key aspects of an Obama-era rule limiting methane emissions from oil and gas drilling. The agency is taking comment on the proposal through Aug. 9, so finalizing it by the end of the month may be optimistic.

— Requirements set by Congress to notify cities and towns along the Great Lakes when sewer overflows foul the waters may be walked back, according to another [listing](#). EPA said it "may extend the implementation deadline for individual communities" if meeting the current December deadline might result in undue economic hardship.

#### **Interior:**

— Interior [plans](#) to announce its decision on whether to list the lesser prairie chicken as an endangered species in September, Esther Whieldon [reports](#).

— BLM [plans](#) this month to propose rescinding an Obama-era fracking rule that put more stringent standards on the practice on public lands, Ben Lefebvre [reports](#). The move comes in response to President Donald Trump's executive order on streamlining regulations.

— Interior also said it [plans to propose](#) a rule this month to "revise or rescind" another Obama-era BLM regulation limiting methane emissions from oil and gas drilling. A Congressional Review Act resolution to overturn that rule failed in the Senate earlier this year.

#### **DOE:**

— The agenda includes [new plans](#) to examine whether DOE can or should establish a special application process to approve "small-scale" LNG exports to countries that are not joined in free trade agreements with the U.S., Darius Dixon [reports](#). The rulemaking seeks to "clarify" DOE's interpretation of its public interest responsibilities, and the department said it hopes to have a proposal out by the end of the year.

— DOE also [wants advice](#) on how to incorporate new measures in how it crafts its energy efficiency rules, Darius reports. The agency is "evaluating the potential use of some form of a market-based approach such as an averaging, trading, fee-base or other type of market-based policy mechanism for the U.S. Appliance and Equipment Energy Conservation Standards program," according to a new agenda entry. More [here](#).

— Computer efficiency standards no longer appear to be part of DOE's plans, having disappeared from the latest agenda, "and DOE appears to have [removed the webpage](#) dedicated to the yearslong process," Darius writes.

**\*\* A message from Growth Energy:** The Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act provides a simple and long-overdue RVP fix that will improve air quality, lower prices at the pump, and level the playing field for homegrown biofuels in markets where drivers want it. The solution is clear: Congress must act. \*\*

**APPROPS APPROVES SPENDING BILL:** The Senate Appropriations Committee approved its \$38.4 billion energy and water spending package on a 30-1 vote, Annie and Darius report. The only "no" vote came from Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), who pressed his fellow appropriators to reconsider their decision to nix funding for the troubled MOX nuclear project in his home state.

**Appropriators ding White House over ARPA-E:** The committee report released after approving the spending bill, which would fund the Energy Department's Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy at \$330 million, also went out of its way to "definitively" reject the White House's "short-sighted proposal" to eliminate the program. The report also instructs that no federal funds should be used to "plan or execute the termination of ARPA-E."

**CANTWELL TO DOI IG: INVESTIGATE THIS.** Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) said today she is asking the Interior Department's inspector general to investigate the agency's recent reassignment of a number of senior executive staff, in light of a recent whistleblower complaint filed by Joel Clement, a former senior official who dealt with climate change at the agency and was transferred in June to a position collecting royalties from oil and gas companies. "We need to make sure that those individuals who have the experience who are involved in science are going to continue to fill those responsibilities," she said today at an Energy and Natural Resources confirmation hearing for several nominees. Esther reports more here.

**ENRD NOMINEE COMMITTEE VOTE DELAYED:** The Senate Judiciary Committee has delayed a vote on Jeffrey Bossert Clark to be assistant attorney general in charge of the Environment and Natural Resources Division. A Democratic aide told POLITICO that committee rules require a majority of senators present to consent to moving a nominee forward, and Republicans did not have the votes present to do so.

**EASIER RIDING?** The Justice Department said today that Harley-Davidson would not have to pay a portion of a Clean Air Act settlement it reached with the Obama administration over sales of after-market defeat devices that boosted motorcycle performance, but also increased smog-forming emissions, Alex Guillén reports. Under an originally proposed deal, Harley-Davidson would have paid a \$12 million fine and given \$3 million to the American Lung Association of the Northeast. But today's new consent decree proposed in court keeps in place the \$12 million civil penalty but drops the \$3 million pollution project.

**NONPROFIT WATCHDOG ASKS FOR DOJ INVESTIGATION OF BERNHARDT:** The nonpartisan Campaign for Accountability is asking the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia to investigate whether David Bernhardt, the Trump administration's nominee for the No. 2 spot at Interior, violated federal law by continuing to advise former lobbying clients even after deregistering as a lobbyist in November 2016. "Mr. Bernhardt appears to have continued with business as usual despite terminating his lobbying registration. Sadly, it appears that Mr. Bernhardt is following a long-standing Trump Administration practice of ignoring ethics rules,"



the group's executive director, Daniel Stevens, said in a statement. Other groups are also raising questions about whether Bernhardt misled lawmakers in his written responses to questions about his lobbying work. Bernhardt told senators he had "not engaged in regulated lobbying on behalf of Westlands Water District after Nov. 18, 2016," but emails obtained by activists under public records law show Bernhardt continued to advise the district on legislation.

**NAME CHANGE:** Billionaire environmentalist Tom Steyer's NextGen Climate today relaunched itself as NextGen America, it announced today. The change reflects "the breadth of the organization's efforts to promote American values and stand up" to Trump and the GOP's "assault on our way of life," the group said.

### QUICK HITS:

- Dakota Access developer's new pipeline rankling regulators, Associated Press.
- Pipeline leak results in brine spill in McKenzie County, The Bismarck Tribune.
- Will proposed cuts undermine Trump's vision of 'energy dominance'? The Washington Post.

### WIDE WORLD OF POLITICS:

- Koch network prepares pivot to tax reform
- Senate Republicans still at impasse after late-night health care meeting
- Trump goes off-script and fumes about Sessions and Russia probe

**\*\* A message from Growth Energy:** The solution to cleaner, homegrown fuels is just one decision away. By fixing outdated Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) regulations, Congress will give Americans the freedom to choose cleaner-burning, less expensive biofuel blends and lift regulatory burdens on local fuel retailers so they can offer drivers better options year-round. This vital market incentivizes innovation and investment in advanced biofuel technologies while reducing our dependence on foreign fossil fuels and lowering our carbon footprint. The solution is The Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act. A fix that is good for consumers, retailers and our planet. \*\*

*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/afternoon-energy/2017/07/exxon-fined-for-violation-under-tillerson-023849>

### Stories from POLITICO Pro

**Treasury slaps Exxon with \$2 million fine for 'reckless disregard' of Russia sanctions** Back

By Ben Lefebvre | 07/20/2017 02:49 PM EDT

The Treasury Department hit Exxon Mobil with a \$2 million fine Thursday for "reckless disregard" in breaching U.S. sanctions against Russia when Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was running the oil company.

The violation occurred in May 2014, a month after the U.S. imposed sanctions against several Russians in an effort to punish Moscow for annexing Ukraine's Crimean peninsula.

The sanctions fine comes amid an escalating investigation into President Donald Trump's campaign's contacts with Russian officials, and puts Tillerson in an awkward position as the nation's top diplomat. As head of the biggest U.S. oil company, Tillerson signed a multi-billion-dollar partnership with Rosneft, the state-controlled Russian oil company headed by Igor Sechin, a close confidant of President Vladimir Putin who was specifically targeted by the April 2014 sanctions.

According to the Treasury enforcement notice, Exxon executives signed eight legal documents with Sechin related to oil and gas projects with Rosneft in Russia.

The two companies cooperated in an oil project in Arctic waters north of Russia, operations of which were suspended after the sanctions were put in place. Exxon, which under Tillerson pushed against the U.S. sanctions, still maintains a business office in Russia and has asked for a waiver to continue the Arctic drilling project — a request that Treasury has denied.

Exxon and other oil and gas companies have lobbied against S. 722 (115), a bill that would expand the Obama-era Russian sanctions. That bill passed the Senate nearly unanimously in June and would transfer much of the sanctions power from the White House to Congress.

In June, Tillerson testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the expanded sanctions would tie the State Department's hands in negotiating with Moscow.

"We have some channels that are open where we are starting to talk, and I think what I wouldn't want to do is close the channels off," Tillerson told the committee.

An Exxon spokesman called the fine "fundamentally unfair," saying the sanctions targeted Sechin as an individual and not in his role as head of Rosneft.

"Exxon Mobil followed the clear guidance from the White House and Treasury when its representatives signed documents involving ongoing oil and gas activities with Rosneft," Exxon spokesman Alan Jeffers said, adding that Exxon would challenge the fine.

Exxon also pointed to a May 2014 statement by a Treasury spokesperson who offered guidance on the sanctions by way of the example that BP's American CEO was permitted to participate in Rosneft board meetings with Sechin so long as the activity related to Rosneft's business and not Sechin's personal business.

For his part, Sechin earlier this year called the sanctions "totally unjustified and even illegal," saying his role at the company was separate from the Kremlin. "One cannot transfer political responsibility on to the corporate level," he said. Russia owns a 50 percent controlling stake in Rosneft, the country's biggest oil producer.

In its enforcement notice, Treasury said there was no legal distinction between the personal and professional roles of a person on the sanctions list.

"No materials issued by the White House or the Department of Treasury asserted an exception or carve-out for the professional conduct of designated or blocked person," the department said in its notice. "ExxonMobil demonstrated reckless disregard for U.S. sanctions requirements when it failed to consider warning signs associated with dealing in the blocked services of specially designated nationals."

*Victoria Guida contributed to this report.*

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

### **Treasury denies Exxon waiver from Russian sanctions** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 04/21/2017 02:16 PM EDT

The Trump administration said Friday that it would not grant a waiver from Russian sanctions to Exxon Mobil or any other energy companies.

The Treasury Department announcement follows reports that Exxon had been seeking such a waiver to drill in the Black Sea. It comes as the FBI and congressional intelligence committees investigate Russian hacking aimed at disrupting the last election and potential contact with members of President Donald Trump's campaign.

Exxon had a partnership with Russia's state-owned Rosneft dating back to 2011 that started to yield oil just before the Obama administration set the sanctions in 2014 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Former Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson now heads the State Department, but had promised to step aside from decisions involving his previous employer.

The company had sought waivers since 2015 and received permission to maintain a small office in Russia to ensure it did not lose drilling rights under the partnership. Current and former officials at the State Department had said it was unclear whether the oil major was still pushing to expand its activities there.

"In consultation with President Donald J. Trump, the Treasury Department will not be issuing waivers to U.S. companies, including Exxon, authorizing drilling prohibited by current Russian sanctions," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in the one-sentence press release Friday.

Pursuing the waiver would have been politically sensitive and possibly have had more potential cons for Exxon and the Trump administration than pros, said Jim Krane, fellow in energy geopolitics at Rice University's Baker Institute.

"There seems to be very little upside to singling out Exxon Mobil and Russia for special treatment," Krane said. "It would give Russia political and commercial leverage over one of America's biggest and most politically connected companies, which implies heightened Russian influence in the Trump administration. A Trump administration approval of a waiver would thus reek of conflict of interest."

While Tillerson has recused himself from matters involving Exxon, the State Department along with the Treasury Department would be responsible for granting any waiver for the energy company to operate in Russia while sanctions are in place.

*To view online [click here](#).*

[Back](#)

## **White House trumpets early success in wiping out regulations [Back](#)**

By Andrew Restuccia | 07/19/2017 09:19 PM EDT

The White House on Thursday released its first official scorecard on the administration's progress in taking a wrecking ball to former President Barack Obama's regulatory legacy, saying it has shelved or postponed hundreds of pending rules with many more on the chopping block.

"By amending and eliminating regulations that are ineffective, duplicative, and obsolete, the Administration can promote economic growth and innovation and protect individual liberty," the White House Office of Management and Budget said as it posted the [rundown](#) Thursday morning, formally known as the Unified Agenda. It called its steps so far "the beginning of fundamental regulatory reform and a reorientation toward reducing unnecessary regulatory burden on the American people."

The anti-regulation push is perhaps the greatest success so far of Donald Trump's presidency — a contrast to the resistance he's faced on repealing Obamacare, restricting immigration, rewriting the tax code or building a border wall.

Liberal watchdog groups accused the administration of putting corporate profits ahead of the interests of the public.

"The only winners from this Unified Agenda are the corporate interests whose deregulatory wish lists the administration has adopted wholesale," said Amit Narang, a regulatory policy expert at Public Citizen. "Anyone who believes in protecting public health, safety, infrastructure security and the environment will be outraged by this radical overreach in repealing regulations."

Trump's agencies have withdrawn or postponed hundreds of regulatory actions that the Obama administration had in the works late in 2016, OMB said in a preview provided to POLITICO late Wednesday.

Among other details released Thursday, the Interior Department said it plans to publish a proposal this month to rescind Obama-era restrictions for fracking on public land. And while Trump has already vowed to kill the Obama administration's sweeping climate regulation for power plants, Thursday's listing outlined the legal grounds that the Environmental Protection Agency intends to cite — that EPA's Obama-era actions exceeded the agency's "statutory authority."

OMB also boasted that the new administration has proposed astronomically fewer rules than Obama did during his early days in office. And it [estimated](#) that Trump's regulatory actions

through last month will reduce economic burdens by \$22 million a year — in contrast with more than \$3 billion in annual burdens that Obama's agencies had imposed as of the same point in 2009.

The White House didn't release its full data until Thursday, making those estimates impossible to check immediately. But Trump has made it clear that erasing regulations is one of the prime missions he has set for his administration. With Trump's legislative agenda stalled, administration officials are increasingly looking toward deregulation as an issue they can sell to his base ahead of the midterm elections.

"Government is using muscles it hasn't used in a really long time, exposing and removing redundant and unnecessary regulation," OMB Director Mick Mulvaney said in a statement.

Liberals have been increasingly dismayed by Trump's anti-regulation push, however.

"He's done tremendous damage," Rena Steinzor, a University of Maryland law professor who has tracked regulations for decades, told POLITICO in May. "I've been watching through six presidents, and all that pales in comparison to this."

Public Citizen's Narang said Thursday that deregulation "has led to historic disasters such as the BP oil spill in the Gulf, the Wall Street meltdown that led to the Great Recession and, most recently in the U.K., the Grenfell Tower fire.

"What this Unified Agenda makes clear is that, at the behest of big corporations, the Trump administration is laying the foundation for a new wave of deregulatory disasters," he added.

The product that OMB released Thursday is the Trump administration's first update of the Unified Agenda, a twice-a-year compilation of planned or expected regulatory actions across the executive branch.

The agenda normally attracts little attention from the media or the public, but Trump has scrambled the recipe by adding "deregulatory actions" to its name and mission. A more complete version of the Unified Agenda will be released in the fall, when agencies may have a better handle on how to carry out Trump's policies — including a mandate that they repeal two regulations for every new one they propose.

The Obama White House's final Unified Agenda included more than 3,300 regulatory actions, including 193 it deemed "economically significant."

In contrast, OMB said the Trump administration has shelved about 860 regulatory actions, either withdrawing them or moving them from "active status." Those include 469 regulatory actions that agencies have withdrawn altogether.

It said Trump's agencies have also proposed just 58 "economically significant" regulations, down about half from Obama's last year in office. The White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs defines an economically significant regulation as a rule that could have an effect on the economy of \$100 million or more.

Agencies have also taken at least 16 "deregulatory actions," according to OMB. Those include late Obama-era regulations that Trump wiped out with a stroke of a pen after Congress voted to block them during his first few months as president.

While the White House's latest numbers are new, Trump has made little secret of his anti-regulation crusade. His best-known targets have included Obama administration regulations limiting greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, requiring restaurants to list calories on their menus and barring some mentally ill people from buying guns.

But OMB says much more is in the works. For example, it said, the Department of Transportation is preparing to offer passenger railroads "greater flexibility" in meeting crashworthiness standards, while the Labor Department will streamline approvals for apprenticeship programs and the EPA will abandon "a costly and premature plan to regulate oil and gas development" on certain Indian reservations.

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## **EPA to revoke Clean Power Plan as beyond authority, OMB says [Back](#)**

By Alex Guillén | 07/20/2017 08:38 AM EDT

EPA's forthcoming review of the Clean Power Plan will propose revoking the landmark regulation "on grounds that it exceeds the statutory authority provided under section 111 of the Clean Air Act," according to an [update](#) to the White House's Unified Agenda released today.

The rule's entry does not describe any time frame to propose repealing the rule, nor to finalize the repeal. EPA's proposal has been under review at the Office of Management and Budget since June 8.

The entry in the Unified Agenda, which describes ongoing regulatory and deregulatory activities across the federal government, does not describe exactly what legal arguments EPA will invoke in walking back the rule.

However, the states and companies that challenged the rule in court — including now-Administrator Scott Pruitt, as Oklahoma's attorney general — made two primary arguments against the rule.

They said EPA should not have been able to go "beyond the fence line" to require fuel shifting away from coal toward natural gas and renewables. And they alleged that the Clean Air Act's wording bars EPA from regulating carbon dioxide from power plants under Section 111 because it already regulates mercury from those sources under Section 112.

The Obama administration pushed back on both arguments in court last year, arguing it was appropriate to consider the best options for reducing emissions and that the text of the Clean Air Act did not prohibit such regulation. But the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals never issued a decision in the Clean Power Plan case, instead deciding to put the litigation on hold while the

Trump administration revisits the rule.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** EPA in the coming months will release its proposed legal justification for repealing the Clean Power Plan, take public comment and finalize the decision. It is expected to face an immediate court challenge.

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### **EPA plans WOTUS rewrite rule for December** [Back](#)

By Annie Snider | 07/20/2017 08:37 AM EDT

EPA is planning a December unveiling of its rewrite of the controversial rule defining which streams and wetlands get federal protection.

A [listing](#) in the Unified Agenda posted by the White House today indicates the agency plans to put the proposed rewrite of the Waters of the U.S. rule out for public comment in December.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is taking a two-step approach to undoing the Obama administration's rule on the topic. The agency took the first step last month, with a proposed rule to formally take the Obama era rule off the books. The rewrite rule, which EPA has solicited input from states and local government officials, would be the second step.

Both rules are certain to face fierce legal challenges. Environmental groups and states supportive of the Obama rule have indicated they are prepared to sue over efforts to repeal it. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump has directed EPA to take an unproven approach to the new rule, relying on a plurality opinion in a 2006 Supreme Court case that lower courts have ruled is not controlling.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** EPA will draft its rewrite of the Waters of the U.S. rule based on Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia's much narrower interpretation of which streams and wetlands warrant federal protection.

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### **Interior to propose ESA listing decision on lesser prairie chicken in September** [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 07/20/2017 10:17 AM EDT

The Interior Department plans to issue a proposed rule on whether to list the lesser prairie chicken as an endangered species in September, according to a [listing](#) in the Unified Agenda posted by the White House today.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in November [initiated a review](#) of a petition by green groups WildEarth Guardians, Center for Biological Diversity and Defenders of Wildlife to list the lesser

prairie chicken populations in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Oil and gas groups have argued the bird does not need to be listed and that the industry has taken steps to mitigate the impact of their projects on lesser prairie chickens. The bird's habitat overlaps with areas ripe for oil and gas production including the Permian Basin.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** FWS expects to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking on the listing petition in September. The agency is statutorily required to decide whether a listing is "warranted" within 12 months of initiating a review, which means it has until the end of November to make the call.

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### **BLM to propose fracking rule withdrawal this month [Back](#)**

By Ben Lefebvre | 07/20/2017 10:15 AM EDT

The Trump administration plans to propose rescinding an Obama-era rule that put more stringent standards on hydraulic fracturing on public lands, according to an [update](#) to the Unified Agenda posted this morning.

The Interior Department said it hopes to publish a proposal this month to withdraw the BLM fracking rule, in line with President Donald Trump's Jan. 30 executive order on streamlining regulations and eliminating duplicative rules. Interior determined the rule "does not reflect those policies and priorities, and therefore is proposing to rescind" it, according to the notice.

The BLM fracking rule requires oil and gas companies disclose fracking chemicals and test well integrity before fracking. But the rule has been tied up in court for years, as the oil industry has argued BLM doesn't have the authority to regulate fracking.

The 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals is scheduled to hear oral arguments on July 27 in a case that Interior had tried to stay earlier this year. In June, Interior [told the court](#) it was still mulling whether to rescind or revise the rule.

Interior also said it [plans to propose](#) a rule this month to "revise or rescind" another Obama-era regulation limiting methane emissions from oil and gas drilling. A Congressional Review Act resolution to overturn that rule failed in the Senate earlier this year.

In a separate Unified Agenda [update](#), EPA said it hopes to finalize in August its two-year suspension of enforcement of key aspects of a separate Obama-era rule limiting methane emissions from oil and gas drilling. The agency is taking comment on the proposal through Aug. 9, so finalizing it by the end of the month may be optimistic.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** BLM and EPA will proceed with rulemakings on the various oil and gas rules, although the timelines in the Unified Agenda may slip.

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## **DOE looking at new process for 'small-scale' LNG exports** [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 07/20/2017 09:15 AM EDT

The Energy Department has kicked off a rulemaking to determine whether it can or should establish a special application process for the export of "small" quantities of natural gas to countries the U.S. doesn't have free trade agreements with.

According to an updated list of federal rules posted this morning, the agency has opened a [new docket](#) aimed at improving "application procedures related to natural gas exports, reduce the administrative burdens associated with the small-scale natural gas export market, and result in more efficient processing of applications for small-scale natural gas exports."

Finalizing the rulemaking, which seeks to "clarify" DOE's interpretation of its public interest responsibilities, would allow the agency to "issue an order upon receipt of any application that seeks to export natural gas to non-FTA countries, provided the application meets the criteria for small-scale exports."

The listing indicates that DOE has launched the review under so-called Section 610, which requires federal agencies to review a rule's economic impact on small entities.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The listing on OMB's website indicates that DOE intends to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking by the end of the year.

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## **DOE to collect advice for 'market-based' approach to efficiency rules** [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 07/20/2017 10:14 AM EDT

The Energy Department intends to seek advice for ways to incorporate new measures in how it crafts its energy efficiency rules, according to a new regulatory listing posted on OMB's website today.

DOE is "evaluating the potential use of some form of a market-based approach such as an averaging, trading, fee-base or other type of market-based policy mechanism for the U.S. Appliance and Equipment Energy Conservation Standards program," according to the [listing](#).

The vast majority of the efficiency rules DOE writes have been mandated by Congress, and they are often encouraged by manufacturers who prefer a federal standard over dealing with a state-by-state patchwork of rules.

After holding up a [handful](#) of efficiency rules at the outset of the new administration, DOE eventually moved ahead with a few previously frozen standards, including those for [ceiling fans](#), and announced [plans](#) to reanalyze test procedures for compressors.

However, a rulemaking for computers — a standard rule writers struggled with and that the electronics industry has vigorously opposed — seems to have been discontinued. It's not included in the latest round of ongoing rulemakings on OMB's website and DOE appears to have removed the webpage dedicated to the yearslong process. DOE, which hadn't yet issued a final determination on whether it could regulate those products, embarked on the rulemaking process without expressed direction from Congress.

DOE can seek to regulate products not specified by Congress if it can demonstrate they represent a significant amount of electricity consumption. But DOE had difficulty defining a computer.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The OMB listing says DOE plans to issue a request for information about market-based approaches next month.

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## **Senate panel advances energy and water spending bill without loan program, Yucca [Back](#)**

By Darius Dixon and Annie Snider | 07/18/2017 03:51 PM EDT

The Senate's \$38.4 billion energy and water spending bill boosts science while backing the call by the Trump administration and the House to eliminate the Energy Department's contentious loan program.

The energy and water appropriations subcommittee approved the legislation this afternoon on a voice vote, although Sen. [Lindsey Graham](#) requested to be recorded as a no — most likely because it lacks money for the MOX project.

Sen. [Lamar Alexander](#) said the bill includes \$330 million for the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, and increases funds for DOE's science office — bucking cuts pushed by the House and the White House — but axes the "lower priority" loan program. And the new measure would not fund the long-stalled Yucca Mountain nuclear waste project.

Sen. [Dianne Feinstein](#) decried the effort to close the loan program, which, she said, has 50 pending applications. "Rather than canceling the program ... I think it would've been more fair to sunset the program in a few years, after these companies have been able to complete the loan process," she said.

In a rebuke to the Trump administration, the legislation would provide \$6.2 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers, a \$200 million increase from last year and roughly level with the House measure. It would make use of tax revenues collected from the barge industry for major rehabilitations and new projects and hit targets set in previous legislation for spending on dredging and harbor maintenance.

The bill would also send \$1.3 billion to the Bureau of Reclamation, roughly level with last year and above the levels requested by the Trump administration and proposed in the House measure.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The energy and water spending bill is scheduled for a vote before the full Senate Appropriations Committee this Thursday.

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## **Senate Appropriations approves \$38.4B energy and water spending bill [Back](#)**

By Annie Snider and Darius Dixon | 07/20/2017 01:10 PM EDT

The Senate Appropriations committee sent its \$38.4 billion energy and water spending package to the floor with limited amendments.

On a 30-1 vote, the committee advanced the [measure](#), which rebukes the Trump administration by providing \$330 million for the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy and increases funds for DOE's science office and delivering record funding for the Army Corps of Engineers after the president's budget recommended steep cuts. However, the bill slashes DOE's contentious loan program and includes no funding for the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste project.

The sole no vote came from Sen. [Lindsey Graham](#), who pressed his fellow appropriators to reconsider their decision to nix funding for the troubled MOX nuclear project in his home state. The South Carolina Republican said he would withhold an amendment related to the project until the energy and water measure reaches the Senate floor.

The manager's package approved by the committee includes a provision from Sens. [Dick Durbin](#) (D-Ill.) and [Tammy Baldwin](#) (D-Wisc.) to require the Army Corps of Engineers to release within 30 days of passage a draft plan for keeping Asian carp from reaching the Great Lakes, which was stalled by the Trump administration amid worries from the navigation industry.

Another amendment, from Sens. [Steve Daines](#) (R-Mont.) and [Jeff Merkley](#) (D-Ore.) would lift restrictions on the use of water that was moved via federal water projects for industrial hemp cultivation.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The energy and spending measure heads to the full Senate for consideration, where it is expected to be one of the first appropriations measures taken up.

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## **Interior official files whistleblower complaint over job reassignment [Back](#)**

By Esther Whieldon and Ben Lefebvre | 07/19/2017 07:06 PM EDT

A former senior Interior Department official has filed a whistleblower complaint after the agency transferred him from a leadership position focused on climate change to a desk job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies.

In a [complaint](#) and [disclosure](#) filing with the Office of Special Counsel and in a Washington Post [op-ed](#), former Interior Office of Policy Analysis Director Joel Clement claimed he was [reassigned](#) to a position at the Office of Natural Resources Revenue to stop him from publicly discussing climate change impacts on native Alaskan coastal communities.

Clement was among dozens of senior executive staff reassigned to other jobs in June.

Clement told POLITICO no Interior political staffers ever raised concerns about his activities prior to his reassignment. "It was kind of obvious to reassign the climate adaptation experts to the accounting office where they collect fossil fuel royalty checks. That was pretty flagrant, I would say, in terms of sending the message. So that message was received loud and clear that they wanted me to quit."

Clement said he'd like his old job back, and he hoped other staff would also complain.

Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said the personnel moves were "conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations."

Clement may have difficulty proving his case because agencies have wide discretion to reassign staff, according to Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. "It sounds like he's being retaliated against because of his job, not because of any disclosure he made," Ruch said. "He's suffering due to the nature of his job, and maybe because he did it too well."

*Annie Snider contributed to this report.*

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**Cantwell to ask Interior IG to investigate career staff reassignments** [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 07/20/2017 12:39 PM EDT

Senate Energy and Natural Resources ranking Democrat [Maria Cantwell](#) (D-Wash.) today said she is asking the Interior Department's inspector general to investigate the agency's recent reassignment of a number of senior executive staff.

Cantwell noted a recent op-ed and whistleblower [complaint](#) filed by Joel Clement, a former senior official who dealt with climate change at the agency and was transferred in June to a position collecting royalties from oil and gas companies.

"We need to make sure that those individuals who have the experience who are involved in science are going to continue to fill those responsibilities," Cantwell said at a committee confirmation hearing for six Interior and DOE nominees.

"Sure, there's always reorganization at an agency," she acknowledged. But Cantwell said wants to make sure that people with scientific experience "aren't being reassigned simply because they

have those experiences so that someone, say, more political but without science experience, comes in to take their job."

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Committee members have until tonight to submit any questions for the record they want nominees to answer. The committee typically waits until it has received responses to those questions before holding a vote on nominees.

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## **DOJ drops \$3M in an Obama-era settlement with Harley-Davidson over 'defeat' devices**

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By Alex Guillén | 07/20/2017 10:17 AM EDT

The Trump administration said today that motorcycle manufacturer Harley-Davidson would not have to pay a portion of a settlement related to allegations of violations of the Clean Air Act.

The Obama administration [accused](#) Harley-Davidson last August of selling more than 340,000 after-market defeat devices that boosted motorcycle performance but increased smog-forming emissions.

Under the originally proposed deal, Harley-Davidson would have paid a \$12 million fine and given \$3 million to the American Lung Association of the Northeast for a program to upgrade wood-burning appliances to ones that reduce nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbon pollution.

The [new consent decree](#) proposed in court today keeps in place the \$12 million civil penalty but drops the \$3 million pollution project.

Last month, Attorney General Jeff Sessions [declared](#) an end to such "third-party settlements," in which companies pay for projects not directly related to their violations. That money should not go to "the political friends of whoever is in power," Sessions said at the time.

In its filing with Government Accountability Office, the Trump administration also said it was reviewing the mitigation project in the original deal and working on a legal opinion — a process expected to take several more months to complete.

Federal officials and Harley-Davidson "attempted to negotiate a substitute mitigation project, but were unable to reach timely agreement on a suitable alternative," the administration wrote. "The United States has decided on balance that proceeding now with the substitute consent decree is in the public interest."

**WHAT'S NEXT:** DOJ will take public comment on the new proposed consent decree for 30 days.

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## Koch network prepares pivot to tax reform [Back](#)

By Maggie Severns | 07/20/2017 01:11 PM EDT

A political group backed by Charles and David Koch will soon kick off a multi-million dollar campaign in support of overhauling the tax code that is poised to become the Koch network's closest collaboration with the White House.

The Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity will launch its new tax reform efforts on Aug. 2 at the Newseum, according to an invitation reviewed by POLITICO. The event will feature House Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows, an ally of the Koch network who has been vocal on tax reform. AFP will offer buses to Washington to supporters from surrounding states to attend, and the group plans to host at least three dozen more events in the coming weeks in areas where it has an active presence.

Though the Koch network was often at odds with President Donald Trump during the 2016 election, AFP sees areas for agreement with the White House on tax reform. The group has been in frequent contact with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin — whose chief of staff Eli Miller is a former AFP employee — and it praised Trump's [initial tax plan](#) earlier this year.

"We're hoping to help them pass what we think is this real transformational reform," AFP COO Sean Lansing said in an interview. "As long as they stick to the plan they outlined earlier this year and remain committed to not including a BAT, we're going to be very supportive of that plan."

Keeping the border adjustment tax — a system that taxes imports — that was floated by House Republican leadership earlier this year out of a tax package has become a top priority for the Koch network, which argues the tax would raise prices for consumers. The Koch network has [laid out](#) other priorities for tax reform, including lowering the corporate tax rate and creating fewer income tax brackets.

"Congress hasn't had an opportunity like this in decades, and we're urging members to unify around our vision for bold tax reform," said AFP President Tim Phillips.

The Koch network has not always been satisfied with Republican attempts to overhaul Obamacare. The group opposed a March bill backed by Trump and Capitol Hill Republicans, and Phillips said in June that "we have been disappointed" that Republicans have sought to change parts of the health care system rather than simply repealing the 2010 law.

Lansing echoed earlier pledges from the Koch network that the multi-million dollar tax campaign will both support lawmakers who are seen as allies on Capitol Hill and pressure others on issues like the border adjustment tax. The campaign will include advertising, canvassing and rallies in states where AFP is active, in addition to lobbying lawmakers on Capitol Hill. An AFP spokesman declined to give an exact figure for how much the group plans to spend on the campaign.

"Certainly as we move through the process, we're going to have to take a look at who is with us on tax reform and who is not," Lansing said. "A lack of support is something [lawmakers] do at

their own peril when it comes to 2018. It's not just something we're pushing, it's something voters have been clear about."

AFP also sees the coming tax fight as a potential moment to hit Senate Democrats up for re-election in 2018 who hail from red states where tax reform is popular. The Koch network has said it plans to spend \$300-\$400 million total during the 2018 election cycle, and AFP has 36 state chapters and close to 500 paid staff who knock on doors to persuade voters.

Tax reform is, to some GOP donors, even more tantalizing than Obamacare was before efforts to replace the law stalled.

"Fundamental tax reform is a once-in-a-generation opportunity," said North Carolina activist and donor Art Pope.

The current gridlock over health care and taxes could lead Republicans to stay home next cycle or, "if the problem is some senators are not working for reform, they may see primary opponents," Pope said.

Frustration over gridlock on health care is running high among Republican activists and donors. While some Republicans have suggested launching primaries or cutting off donations to Republicans who contribute to gridlock, not everyone agrees on a solution.

Minnesota-based GOP donor Stan Hubbard said Republicans may need such a large margin in Congress that they can't be "stymied by Democrats" on major legislation.

"In terms of changing these laws, if the American people really want them done, what they're going to have to do is send more Republicans" to Washington, Hubbard said.

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### **Senate Republicans still at impasse after late-night health care meeting [Back](#)**

By Burgess Everett, Seung Min Kim and Jennifer Haberkorn | 07/19/2017 01:27 PM EDT

A key group of Senate Republicans met late into the night Wednesday to try to salvage their health care bill but emerged without any breakthroughs and still appeared far from finding the votes to repeal Obamacare.

Still, as senators left the nearly three-hour meeting at the Capitol, they professed optimism.

The Republicans initially planned to bring in chiefs of staff and health care wonks to advance the negotiations. White House chief of staff Reince Priebus was expected to join and help push the disagreeing senators to yes.

But as the senators kept talking, they re-evaluated their plan and decided not to allow staff in and to keep the room to members only. Priebus strolled out of Sen. John Barrasso's office, as did

White House legislative director Marc Short. The senators would continue talking among themselves.

Talks "narrowed down to try to figure out what is causing members not to be able to vote in favor or problems they have with the bill," said Sen. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), who opposes the GOP's latest repeal and replace draft. "It had merit, and it's something that should have been taking place."

Added Sen. John Kennedy (R-La.): "We're at our best when we're among ourselves."

As the night dragged on, however, Republicans cited good progress but nothing to suggest they had overcome the obstacles that have stymied their previous efforts.

At least 20 Republicans, including leadership allies, moderates and conservatives, worked through the party's myriad disagreements over Medicaid, coverage numbers, lowering premiums and cutting regulations.

Health and Human Service Secretary Tom Price and top Medicaid official Seema Verma were in the room too. And earlier at the White House, senators and administration officials discussed adding billions more to help states worried about Medicaid cuts under the bill.

Yet the conversation among senators focused on the broad contours of the issues.

"We weren't getting into the specifics," said Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska). "We weren't tossing around numbers."

Indeed, senators left uncertain of how a planned vote will go next week, or whether it should even occur while Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) is being treated for cancer.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has pledged to hold a vote next week, but with McCain gone and Sens. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) opposing the repeal and replace plan and not even attending the meeting, success appears far off. Republicans said privately they doubt McCain will be back next week.

"Hard to say [if we're closer]. I'm fine voting next week," said Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.). McCain's absence "does complicate things. And I just don't know if he's going to be back next week."

Privately, senators doubted they could get the 50 votes together for a health care overhaul despite the productive meeting. There was a feeling that while a session that occasionally turned into venting was therapeutic, the challenges facing the fractious 52-member majority may be too great to bridge.

"You understand the math. It just makes things kind of more difficult," said Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.).

"We do have work to do to get to a vote of 50," Barrasso said.



The meeting followed a gathering with President Donald Trump, who ordered senators to stay in Washington until they pass a bill to repeal and replace the 2010 health care law. Barrasso (R-Wyo.) said the meeting was planned before the White House lunch.

But with a new flicker of optimism, GOP leaders are still pushing for a way to advance a health care bill next week even after two other repeal plans fell apart. Senators left the health care meeting at the White House on Wednesday sounding more optimistic that they could revive their bill to replace the Affordable Care Act.

"We're discussing that," Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) said when asked whether some version of the Better Care Reconciliation Act was coming back. "I'm more optimistic that that would be the case. But if there's no agreement, then we'll still vote on the motion to proceed, but it'll be to the 2015 just-repeal bill."

"We have at least momentum. Before, there was none," said Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.).

Sens. Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Paul say the bill isn't conservative enough, making it difficult for McConnell to get the 50 votes he needs. And it was unclear whether billions more for Medicaid will be enough to move the moderate holdouts, with one senator saying there's an "outside chance" of success next week. At the White House, Trump, the senator said, was more effective than he's been on health care in weeks.

The Senate GOP's latest attempt to craft a replacement for Obamacare fell apart earlier this week, as four Republican senators announced that they would oppose the current version of the bill. But Cornyn told reporters following the White House meeting that about 40 members of the GOP Conference are prepared to vote on any health care deal replacing Obamacare and the "differences are narrowing." Trump also sounded a note of optimism during the meeting.

But centrist GOP senators like Rob Portman of Ohio and Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia are not happy about proposed future reductions to Medicaid spending, worried it would kick hundreds of thousands of their constituents off health care. GOP leaders threw into the bill more than \$100 billion to lower premiums and fight drug addiction, but thus far it hasn't been enough.

Cornyn said a key procedural vote to take up legislation will be held regardless of whether it will succeed. McConnell, speaking to reporters after the White House meeting, said he expected to be able to at least proceed to the bill.

But three Senate Republicans — Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Capito and Collins — said Tuesday they would oppose proceeding to a repeal-only measure, effectively tanking the prospects that a floor debate over getting a straight repeal of Obamacare can even begin.

And some key holdouts said their position is unchanged. Portman, who is undecided on a procedural vote but has signaled opposition to a repeal-only bill, said the legislation needs "to do more to show low-income people that they have options" and said the vote next week will fail unless those improvements were made.

Capito said she'll still vote no on proceeding to a bill unless there's a replacement plan she supports.

"The president emphasized repeal and replace. We're still working on it. It's moved a lot farther in terms of where it was in terms of congealing," Capito said.

Murkowski said she wasn't even sure what they would be voting on.

"It's not clear whether there will be a motion to proceed to this repeal and replace. I think that's still under consideration. There will be a vote on something that much is certain," she said, adding that it was hard to answer "unless you know what the question is."

Collins said she was not invited to the Wednesday night meeting and wouldn't be attending.

"I guess it's open invitation, but I didn't know that until it was brought up at the White House. I'm unfortunately committed to something else," she said.

Earlier, at the lunch, Trump said he was surprised to see his "friends" — "They might not be very much longer," he quipped — oppose Senate GOP leaders' plan.

Trump singled out Dean Heller, who is widely considered the GOP's most vulnerable incumbent in 2018, suggesting he was once worried but is now confident the Nevada senator will come around to supporting a replacement bill.

"Look," Trump told the room of Republicans, "he wants to remain a senator, doesn't he? OK? And I think the people of your state, which I know very well, I think they're gonna appreciate what you hopefully will do."

A chuckling Heller said as he returned to the Capitol that those comments were "President Trump being President Trump." And after the late-night Senate meeting, Heller seemed a bit more optimistic.

"It was probably one of the most productive meetings I've been to in a long time," Heller said. "We have some real honest brokers in there who are really trying to solve the problem."

*Nolan McCaskill contributed to this report.*

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**Trump goes off-script and fumes about Sessions and Russia probe** [Back](#)

By Josh Gerstein, Josh Dawsey and Darren Samuelsohn | 07/20/2017 12:44 AM EDT

President Donald Trump impressed senators Wednesday with a cogent, engaged pitch on health care that didn't veer wildly from the script.

Within an hour, without seeking advice from his lawyers or his senior aides, Trump was in the Oval Office telling reporters from The New York Times that he regretted hiring Jeff Sessions as his attorney general and discussing a sensitive investigation his lawyers have told him to keep quiet about — a performance that once again left his most senior aides startled and scrambling to

respond.

Because only one staffer, Hope Hicks, was in Trump's interview, others were left to hurriedly transcribe a tape recording of the meeting after the fact — just so they could know what the president had said. Others rushed to talk to Hicks in the West Wing. "Only Hope really knew," said one senior administration official. "Everyone else was in the dark."

It was another sharp reminder that no matter what policy initiatives the president says he wants to focus on — or how well he sticks to his talking points — that trouble is always right around the corner thanks to the Russia probe. Aides have tried to keep him away from the news media, and particularly from engaging in long on-the-record exchanges where he meanders, but Trump enjoys talking to reporters and wants to be quoted.

The president has grown obsessed with the Russia investigation, now overseen by special counsel Robert Mueller, and has been furious at Sessions since his decision in March to recuse himself.

In the Times interview, Trump also questioned the political leanings and ethics of Sessions' deputy Rod Rosenstein, repeated his claims of conflicts on the part of Mueller and notably shifted his account of his dealings with FBI Director James Comey before he was abruptly fired in May.

Most of the sentiments Trump expressed in the interview did not come as a surprise to his top aides, but they recognized that the president putting those views on the record in such pointed terms was certain to trigger a media firestorm and increase tensions with the Justice Department.

Aides say Trump has no immediate plans to fire Mueller but often fumes about him, his team and where his investigation could lead. Trump told The Times that he believed it would be "a violation" for Mueller to look at his family's financial dealings beyond anything involving Russia, for example. A spokesman for Mueller declined to comment.

Rosenstein isn't someone the president often mentions, one official said, but "it's not like he is close with him."

Trump has blamed Sessions for much of the mess he now finds himself in and sees the recusal as a pivotal moment in his presidency, advisers and aides say. And he thinks Sessions hasn't always presented himself well in public. The top campaign adviser is no longer in the inner circle.

"His feelings are not new here. He just has never said it like this," the senior administration official said.

The official acknowledged that the statements could fuel questions about whether Sessions, one of Trump's earliest backers in the campaign, will resign. While there seemed to be no immediate plans in place for that Wednesday night, administration officials said it was different for Trump to criticize Sessions publicly.

"If you're Jeff, you have to say, why am I sticking around and getting kicked like this?" the official said. "He'll have to have a conversation with the president about it, though I'm not sure

when."

Several Justice Department veterans echoed that view, saying Trump's statement of regret about nominating Sessions and his evident dissatisfaction with the attorney general — who offered to resign in May — raise questions about how Sessions can continue to credibly do his job.

"You got to be looking at Sessions and thinking this is 'The Green Mile.' This dude is walking down the hall for execution at some point, so how much are you going to worry about this guy as your boss?" said one ex-prosecutor who spent more than two decades at the department. "It's unsettling and it's weird."

A Justice Department spokesman declined to comment on Trump's interview, but some of Sessions' friends in Congress quickly rallied behind him and appeared to be urging him to stay in his post. And one person who knows Sessions well said he was already aware that Trump was frustrated with him, had unsuccessfully offered his resignation and had sought advice from the president's top advisers on fixing the situation — to no avail. "He's not just going to quit because of an interview," this person said. "He'll wait for it to blow over."

"No one in America can match the excellence of [@jeffsessions](#) as Attorney General. Trump agenda would be crippled w/o him," Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) wrote on Twitter.

Former officials said that while there have sometimes been quiet tensions between the Justice Department and the White House, they could not recall any episode in recent decades where the president publicly unloaded on the department's leadership as Trump did Wednesday.

"We are in uncharted territory," said Jan Miller, a U.S. attorney in Illinois under President George W. Bush and a former prosecutor in Maryland alongside Rosenstein. "I certainly don't remember a time in my lifetime when the president has publicly questioned the sitting attorney general and deputy attorney general."

And former acting Attorney General Sally Yates, who Trump fired after she refused to defend his first attempt at a travel ban, tweeted Thursday that Trump's "attack on Russia recusal reveals yet again his violation of the essential independence of DOJ, a bedrock principle of our democracy."

The senior official who spoke to POLITICO said he was taken aback by the president's claim that Rosenstein shouldn't be overseeing the Russia probe because of his involvement in the Comey firing and by his suggestion the longtime prosecutor may be a closet liberal because he's from Baltimore. "I've never really heard him go after Rosenstein. That surprised me," the senior official said.

Rosenstein's friend Miller dismissed the criticism: "These allegations of a conflict of interest against Rod are baseless. He's going to continue to do what he needs to do and let the cards fall where they may."

At a briefing Wednesday morning, Rosenstein told reporters it was "a great honor and privilege" to work at the Justice Department. "I like my job," he said. "I'm very happy to have this job."

The Russia investigation has taken a new turn in recent days, with Trump's son Donald Trump Jr. coming under scrutiny for a meeting he took at Trump Tower in June 2016 with a Kremlin-connected lawyer who offered dirt on Hillary Clinton.

The president told The New York Times that he did not believe he was personally under investigation, though it's been reported that Mueller is exploring whether Trump's firing of Comey was an attempt to obstruct justice. "I'm not under investigation," Trump told The Times. "For what? I didn't do anything wrong."

Trump did not consult before the interview with his lawyers, who weren't aware that he was going to be talking about the investigation extensively, according to a person close to the legal team. He didn't prepare answers with top aides, some of whom were unaware he had been in such a lengthy interview with The New York Times.

While the chat was scheduled, it went longer than they expected and was far more wide-ranging, one official said. "It was Trump saying what he thought," this person said. "It's what he does every day on Twitter."

Afterward, some in his circle didn't learn about the full extent of his comments until they were posted online, an adviser said.

Several legal experts said they were troubled that Trump seemed to be faulting Sessions for stepping aside from the Russia probe, though that was the ethical thing for him to do.

"President Trump needs to understand and respect the necessity of independence and impartiality of law enforcement in our country," said William Jeffress, a white-collar defense attorney who represented former President Richard Nixon and Vice President Dick Cheney's senior aide, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, during the Valerie Plame CIA leak case.

Jeffress also suggested that the president's apparent concern about Sessions' and Rosenstein's loyalty supported Comey's claims that the president sought a pledge of loyalty in exchange for Comey remaining in his job.

"The president is indicating that he expects the Justice Department to serve his personal and political interests, which is flatly contrary to tradition in the administration of justice in the decades since Watergate," Jeffress added.

Some lawyers also said Trump's comments to The Times raise questions about statement he's made in the past about key issues — like whether he asked Comey in February to shut down his investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn, who had direct contacts with Russian officials during the presidential transition.

Trump appears to have shifted his explanation on his conversation with Comey, who testified last month that the president urged him to "let this go" concerning the investigation into Flynn, who had resigned the day before.

At a May 18 news conference, Trump denied asking Comey to back away from the Flynn investigation, and he later pledged to testify under oath to that effect.

In the Times interview, Trump had a different answer. "I don't remember even talking to him about any of this stuff," he said, prompting the former law enforcement official to take note that the president's explanation on the Comey meeting "makes me wonder whether he's starting to take his lawyers' advice."

"If he eventually has to answer FBI questions or testify under oath, saying he doesn't recall is legally safer for him than denying outright that he asked Comey to 'let it go,'" said a former law enforcement source.

One prominent former Justice official said the public criticism of Sessions could be a prelude to Trump forcing him out and then trying to shut down the Russia probe.

"The president's move to force out Sessions may well be a prelude to replacing Sessions with a Trump loyalist who will not be recused from Russia matters and who can overrule deputy AG Rosenstein, dismiss Mueller and end his investigation," said Walter Dellinger, a former acting solicitor general under President Bill Clinton.

But former Justice Department official Jim Trusty said that he doubts Trump's comments on Sessions will set back the Trump-Russia investigation, since Sessions is already recused from that case.

"The good news is that Sessions' credibility doesn't matter for that investigation, but it is a historically strange moment to have a sitting president berate the sitting attorney general publicly," Trusty said. "It's a different world when the president is expressing regret that he hired the attorney general."

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By Anthony Adragna | 07/21/2017 05:41 AM EDT

*With help from Darius Dixon, Eric Wolff, Esther Whieldon and Annie Snider*

**TRUMP TEAM TOUTS BRIGHT SPOT:** It's been a rough first six months for President Donald Trump's administration beset by the Russia scandal and congressional dysfunction, but OMB Director Mick Mulvaney touted his deregulatory efforts as a transformative bright spot Thursday, pointing to 860 removed or withdrawn regulatory actions. He cited Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's efforts to "streamline the paperwork for outdoorsmen and outdoorswomen" using national parks as an example of something "really small" by itself that nevertheless has a major impact "when you do that 860 times in the first six months." Mulvaney also noted that with respect to EPA specifically, the administration does "foresee a fundamental difference in the way that agency functions, and we think they should be able to function in the future with a much smaller workforce."

**Boxed in on benefits:** Mulvaney touted the savings to businesses from the abandoned regulations, but he refused to offer a figure on the benefits those regulations would had for the public or the economic activity they would have generated. "Our attitude has been, and our philosophy has been that the previous administration fudged the numbers, that they either overstated the benefits to people or understated the costs," he said, declining to name other benefits the administration considers. "And we're going to look at it in a much more pragmatic perspective." ME readers may remember EPA justified a two-year stay of a methane rule by citing reduced costs to business, while acknowledging those savings would come at the expense of "associated climate and human health benefits" that would not materialize. This is an issue worth watching as the administration moves forward on deregulatory efforts.

**LET'S MAKE A DEAL:** Russia's Rosneft hopes to swap its stake in Venezuelan-owned U.S.-based refiner Citgo so it might avoid complications from U.S. sanctions, Reuters [reports](#), citing two sources familiar with the deal. Trump earlier this week threatened "strong economic actions" if the government in Caracas moves ahead with plans to seat a new legislature, a move that might undercut Venezuela's state oil company and complicate foreign ownership in the Citgo subsidiary in the longer term.

**Speaking of Russia,** a sanctions bill constraining Trump appears likely to move forward over White House objections, POLITICO's Elana Schor [reports](#). It's not clear what sore spots remain for U.S. oil and gas companies, which have warned that the Senate's sanctions language could imperil their ability to partner with Russian companies in projects around the globe. But House Majority Leader [Kevin McCarthy](#) and Minority Whip [Steny Hoyer](#) remain in negotiations to iron out remaining differences on the bill.

**TGIF MY FRIENDS!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and President Andrew Johnson was the last president before Trump without a pet (though he did feed mice he saw around the White House). For today: Which president's famous Scottish Terrier was named Fala? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**ME FIRST — SANDERS WON'T BACK ENERGY BILL:** Sen. [Bernie Sanders](#) isn't prepared to back the Senate's reintroduced energy bill [S. 1460 \(115\)](#) in its current form. "As a nation, our job is to move away from fossil fuels toward sustainable energy and energy efficiency. This bill does the opposite," he told ME in a statement. "It would make us more reliant on fracking for natural gas for decades to come by expediting the review process for natural gas pipelines and liquefied natural gas. It would also provide millions of taxpayer dollars to research new offshore natural gas extraction techniques." But Sanders remained open to changes that might draw his support, saying he wanted to "offer amendments to this bill to effectively combat climate change and ensure our planet remains healthy and habitable for our children and grandchildren."

**Sen. [Martin Heinrich](#) summed up the state of play:** "Nobody is going to get everything they want in that legislation, and that's why it's going to pass."

**REPUBLICANS GEARING UP FOR E15 BILL MARKUP:** EPW committee Republicans are less than enthused about allowing more ethanol into the fuel system and prepping at least four amendments for a possible markup next week of Sen. [Deb Fischer](#)'s E15 bill. A Republican Senate aide told ME the group is planning on filing amendments to sunset the conventional biofuel mandate typically filled by corn ethanol and to cap the amount of ethanol in the fuel system at 9.7 percent. The amendments will also seek to make the E15 waiver contingent on EPA completing required Clean Air Act studies on ethanol and certifying that E15 doesn't effect air quality, and to make the waiver contingent on the cost of the Renewable Fuel Standard credits staying low.

**What about Dems?** Committee Dems have been tight lipped about what they'll do, but they have leverage given that Fischer needs six of them to pass her bill. Sen. [Tom Carper](#), the committee's top Democrat, told reporters he's very concerned about the six merchant refiners that employ many Delaware workers, and he wants transparency in the RFS credit markets to help them out. He also said his colleagues want some kind of protection or policy help for cellulosic ethanol, which has so far been the big disappointment of the program. The committee has five possible Democratic presidential contenders among its ranks, and they may be thinking about the needs of Iowa caucus goers as they contemplate their vote.

**Not all advanced biofuel companies:** More than two dozen advanced biofuel and cellulosic ethanol producers and associations sent a [letter](#) asking EPW committee leadership to support a clean bill. The letter argues that the bill does enough to support cellulosic ethanol by simply increasing the market for ethanol, and no further amendments will be needed.

**Or maybe it's moot:** EPW hasn't released an agenda for Wednesday's markup, but Growth Energy, an ethanol producer's group, said late Thursday night that the bill won't make the cut. "We are disappointed the Environment and Public Works committee decided not to consider the



Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act ([S. 517 \(115\)](#)) before August recess," Emily Skor, CEO of Growth Energy, said in the statement.

**THAT WAS QUICK:** Wasting no time, Exxon Mobil filed [a lawsuit](#) Thursday afternoon with U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas challenging a \$2 million fine from the Treasury against the oil and gas giant for violating sanctions against Russia back in 2014, Pro's Ben Lefebvre and Victoria Guida [report](#). The move puts the current administration in the position of defending Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin against a lawsuit filed by a company that was headed until late last year by Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

**\*\* A message from Growth Energy:** Americans deserve cleaner, more consistent fuel choices at the pump, and Growth Energy is leading efforts to make that a reality. The Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act is a simple fix that will improve air quality, lower prices at the pump, and spur innovations in biofuels. [Learn more.](#) \*\*

**JUST A MATTER OF TIME NOW:** Dave Bernhardt is expected to become Interior's No. 2 Monday evening after clearing a key procedural hurdle Thursday afternoon with bipartisan backing, Ben [reports](#). Seven members of the Democratic caucus — [Michael Bennet](#), [Joe Donnelly](#), [Martin Heinrich](#), [Heidi Heitkamp](#), [Angus King](#), [Joe Manchin](#) and [Brian Schatz](#) — voted with Republicans to invoke cloture on the nomination. Bernhardt has faced criticism over his previous work as an oil and gas lobbyist and his time as Interior's solicitor in the George W. Bush administration. A final vote on his confirmation is slated for Monday at 5:30 p.m.

**DOE NOMINEE OUTS HIS 'EVOLVED' POSITION ON GAYS:** The most frequent question for DOE general counsel nominee David Jonas was about how he "evolved" on his 1990s era belief that gays and women shouldn't serve in the military. Jonas acknowledged the issue in his opening statement, disowning his old position and saying that, as a former Marine, he has "the utmost respect for anyone, no matter the gender, race or sexual orientation, who is willing to serve." To convince Sen. [Mazie Hirono](#), Jonas tried to demonstrate his evolution by describing his hiring of an intern at the National Nuclear Security Administration who was "clearly, from his resume, gay." He hired him, though, because the intern was the best-qualified candidate and he has served as a reference.

**Democrat [Maria Cantwell](#) came through with the obvious follow-up:** "I was struck by your comment that you thought someone was gay by their resume," she told Jonas, who replied that the intern listed several LGBT groups on his resume and "wanted it known" that he was gay. Satisfied, Cantwell said, "It's not like you looked at a piece of paper and made an assumption about someone."

**BACK UP AND RUNNING:** Two hours after POLITICO [observed](#) the page had disappeared, Interior had restored its webpage containing data on employee discrimination complaints, Pro's Esther Whieldon [reports](#). Heather Swift, an agency spokeswoman, said in an email that the agency's equal opportunity office had "reorganized their website." A link to the data that previously existed at the bottom of the agency's homepage has not been restored.

**SOLAR TRADE CASE OPPOSITION COALITION ANNOUNCED:** A number of groups and companies, including the Solar Energy Industries Association, Johnson Controls and solar

investment financial backer Keystone Power Holdings, have formed a new opposition coalition against a trade petition by Suniva and SolarWorld Americas. The Energy Trade Action Coalition has not announced all of its members nor how much it expects to spend fighting the petition that requests Trump to impose trade sanctions on certain imported solar panel modules and cells. But a news release said the coalition's members will actively engage with the Trump administration, Congress, the media and public on the issue.

**GO WEST, YOUNG SECRETARY!** Zinke is in Colorado today and Saturday for a series of speeches. Today he'll deliver remarks at the [Western Conservative Summit](#) in Denver. Then, Saturday, Zinke will visit the Rocky Mountain National Park and hold a media availability at 10 a.m. Mountain time before speaking to the American Legislative Exchange Council in remarks that are not public.

**LOTS A TALK IN LITTLE ROCK:** EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt continued his tour of states Thursday, this time in Arkansas, where he again focused on his efforts to redo the agency's Waters of the U.S. rule. He [spoke](#) with "folks representing rice, pork, cattlemen, electric utilities & other vital industries" about the issue and then [met with](#) Gov. Asa Hutchinson and state Attorney General Leslie Rutledge.

**ONE STEP CLOSER TO KING COVE ROAD:** Alaska Sens. [Lisa Murkowski](#) and [Dan Sullivan](#) vowed Thursday to redouble their efforts to get the Senate to pass legislation authorizing a land exchange needed for the construction of the King Cove road between two Alaskan communities. "I am grateful to have bipartisan support in Congress and — finally — an administration that understands why a road is the best and only option to truly protect the health and safety of local residents," Murkowski said in a statement. Their comments came after the House passed legislation doing precisely that by a 248-179 [vote](#). More about the long-standing fight [here](#).

**GAO TO EXAMINE SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL COMPOSITION:** Sens. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) and [Tom Carper](#) said Thursday GAO had agreed to their request to examine how EPA selects federal advisory committee members. "I'm pleased that the Government Accountability Office is going to look into how President Trump's EPA is getting scientific advice, including the process that led to the agency's abrupt, unprompted dismissal of scientists from more than a dozen advisory positions," Carper, the top EPW Democrat, said in a statement.

**COOPER OPPOSES OFFSHORE DRILLING:** North Carolina Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper announced Thursday his administration opposed opening up the state's Atlantic waters to offshore oil and gas drilling, the News & Observer [reports](#). "I can sum it up in four words: Not off our coast," Cooper said. "It is simply not worth the risk." The state's Department of Environmental Quality plans to submit comments to Interior today.

**D.C. COURT SWATS DOWN EXELON-PEPCO MERGER CHALLENGE:** The merger is still making news 16 months after it closed. The D.C. Court of Appeals Thursday afternoon [rejected](#) an attempt to undo the local regulatory approval Exelon Corp. got to buy Pepco Holdings last year. The mayor's office, the District's Office of People's Counsel and others argued that the D.C. Public Service Commission made procedural errors, failed to properly explain its eventual approval of the merger and overstepped its authority in approving the \$6.8

billion deal. Many of the "procedural objections are not well-founded," the three-judge panel wrote, adding that the proceedings were "extensive." Public Citizen, which intervened in the case opposing the merger, said it was disappointed in the court decision, called the merger "a bad deal," and was "considering" its next steps.

**Some courtly praise:** Senior Judge Michael Farrell wrote a concurring opinion mostly to praise D.C. regulators for their "gruelingly conscientious work" to resolve issues in the merger case. "The succession of detailed administrative orders and findings, especially those bearing the signature of [former] Commissioner [Joanne Doddy] Fort, are of a clarity and quality any appellate judge could be proud of," Farrell wrote.

**GROUP: CLOVIS PICK ILLEGAL!** The Union of Concerned Scientists says Trump's pick of non-scientist (and former campaign co-chair) Sam Clovis to be USDA's top scientist is illegal, Helena Bottemiller Evich [reports](#). The group argues federal statute stipulates the nominee should be chosen among "distinguished scientists with specialized training or significant experience in agricultural research, education, and economics." Clovis is a former professor in the business administration department at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, and has also raised eyebrows for his climate change views. He said in [a 2014 Iowa interview](#) he's "extremely skeptical" about the consensus view that human activity drives climate change and added "a lot of the science is junk science."

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:** The Supreme Court is [slated](#) to hear oral arguments Oct. 11 in the fight over where the battle over the Waters of the U.S. rule belongs. The case isn't expected to delve into the merits of either the Obama rule defining which streams and wetlands deserve federal protection, nor the Trump administration's rewrite effort, but whether the challenges will first go through district court or appellate court will carry important implications for the looming fight. And you never know what hints the justices might drop along the way - during arguments in a separate wetlands case last year, swing vote Anthony Kennedy [signaled](#) major worries about the federal government's authority under the Clean Water Act, musing that the law is perhaps "unconstitutionally vague."

**FEINSTEIN OPPOSES ALISO CANYON REOPENING:** State regulators may have given the Aliso Canyon natural gas storage facility the green light to reopen at diminished capacity, but California's senior senator is not on board. "State inspectors may have cleared the facility to resume limited operations, but I believe it should remain closed," [Dianne Feinstein](#) said in a statement. "It's time for Southern California to move beyond Aliso Canyon and work toward a cleaner, safer energy system."

**AD CAMPAIGN TARGETS CAFE ROLLBACK:** The Sierra Club is launching a Facebook campaign in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Nevada urging residents to push their senators to oppose rolling back fuel efficiency standards. Sample ad [here](#).

**WHAT A TOWN!** ME spotted quite the trio together Thursday afternoon in the Capitol. University of Kentucky basketball coach John Calipari posed for pictures with former Sen. Rick Santorum, while being shown around by FERC nominee Neil Chatterjee.

**QUICK HITS**

- The Trump Administration Wants To Loosen Bear Hunting Rules In Alaska Parks. [Buzzfeed](#).
- Environmental group sues EPA over pollution rules, cites Houston refineries. [Houston Chronicle](#).
- Open Burns, Ill Winds. [ProPublica](#).
- Maryland plans lawsuit against EPA under Clean Air Act. [WBAL](#).
- This could be the next big strategy for suing over climate change. [Washington Post](#).
- Dakota Access developer's new pipeline rankling regulators. [Seattle Times](#).

## HAPPENING TODAY

12:00 p.m. — 2017 BP Statistical Review of World Energy, National Capital Area Chapter of the U.S. Association for Energy Economics, Chinatown Garden, 618 H St. NW

## THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**\*\* A message from Growth Energy:** The Consumer and Fuel Retailer Choice Act is a simple fix to existing, outdated Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) limits that will improve air quality, lower prices at the pump, and spur innovation and investment in new biofuel technologies while decreasing dependence on oil. Congress can fix this outdated regulation - helping consumers, retailers & the environment - and build a better future for clean energy by supporting S. 517. [Learn more about how Growth Energy is protecting fuel choices.](#) \*\*

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<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/07/white-house-touts-deregulatory-efforts-023853>

## Stories from POLITICO Pro

### Congress likely to tie Trump's hands on Russia sanctions [Back](#)

By Elana Schor | 07/20/2017 07:22 PM EDT

A White House effort to secure changes to a Russia sanctions bill constraining President Donald Trump appears likely to fall short, in a major rebuff by the GOP-led Congress to the leader of its own party.

Senior Republican lawmakers and aides gave their clearest comments yet Thursday that the bill would ultimately move forward without changes sought by the White House, potentially undermining Trump's ability to warm relations with Moscow.

The Senate already passed the bill on a 98-2 vote. And while it's stalled in the House amid partisan finger-pointing, most Republicans are joining Democrats to support adding new sanctions while curbing Trump's power to roll back the penalties against Russia.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has pushed back against the bill for not providing the administration with "flexibility" to deal with Vladimir Putin's government, but his words don't appear to be resonating. GOP lawmakers are loath to be seen as watering down efforts to punish Putin for meddling in the 2016 election, even if many brush off the growing controversy over the Trump campaign's ties to Russia.

Tillerson is "a good friend, and I really love my relationship with him, but that's not likely to occur," Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Bob Corker said Thursday when asked about the White House's request for changes to the sanctions bill.

Language empowering Congress to block Trump from any attempt to ease or end sanctions "is going to stay in this bill," Corker told reporters. "And we've had very constructive meetings with the House — there's no attempt whatsoever to move away from" that provision, the Tennessee Republican added.

A senior House GOP aide put it even more succinctly when it comes to the sanctions bill: "The White House will not be getting what it wants."

The White House has nudged Republicans for weeks to give Trump more leeway to waive new sanctions against Russia, which target entities involved in Putin-sanctioned cyber-attacks as well as elements of Moscow's military intelligence, defense, shipping, and energy sectors.

Trump's legislative affairs director, Marc Short, has blasted the sanctions bill for "delegating foreign policy to 535 members of Congress."

But Trump advisers' sales pitch on sanctions seems to be falling flat with the congressional GOP. The outstanding issues that are holding up the bill, lawmakers say, stem from House Democrats' insistence that their caucus, not just Republicans, get power to force a vote blocking Trump from easing sanctions along with industry concerns about the legislation's impact on overseas dealmaking.

House leaders in both parties are working on a deal to send the bill back to the Senate before the upper chamber leaves for the August recess. That sets up what could be the first potential veto of Trump's presidency, given that his aides have yet to say whether he would sign the legislation without more relaxed authority to waive sanctions.

Trump has repeatedly cast doubt on U.S. intelligence agencies' conclusion that Russia disrupted last fall's election to benefit his candidacy, vowing after his first face-to-face meeting with Putin this month that "it is time to move forward on working constructively with" the longtime U.S. geopolitical opponent.

Most Republicans, however, are not so willing to forgive and forget, and are not backing down from their push to handcuff Trump on Moscow.

"I think there's a commitment by members on both sides to be sure Russia's held accountable ... for meddling not just in our elections, but for disinformation campaigns around the world," Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) said in an interview.

Colorado Sen. Cory Gardner, chairman of the Senate GOP's campaign committee, said his party has "put a very firm policy in place" with passage of the sanctions bill, "that we'd continue to push hard on Russia."

"As long as they continue to violate international law, we are going to continue to use sanctions and every tool at our disposal to push back," Gardner added. "That's the firm commitment of the Senate and I believe, soon, the House."

Florida GOP Sen. Marco Rubio acknowledged in a brief interview that "it's possible" White House lobbying may yet win over House Republicans, "but we'll work against that."

A key Democratic negotiator on the sanctions package agreed that Republicans are not likely to give Trump what he wants. "I'm not sure there's that much concern for what the White House is saying on the House side," Sen. Ben Cardin, the top Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, told reporters this week.

But Cardin underscored that Democrats are not fully prepared to sign off on changes to the Senate-passed bill, citing some proposed tweaks that he found "problematic."

It's not clear where the lingering hurdles are on changes sought by oil and gas producers, as well as other K Street players, which have warned that the Senate's sanctions language could imperil their ability to partner with Russian companies. Corker described that as a "legitimate issue."

In the House, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and Minority Whip Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) are still in talks on resolving a dispute over Democrats' ability to force an anti-Trump vote to preserve sanctions, as well as a late-breaking bid by the California Republican to add North Korea sanctions to the bill. Hoyer sounded a positive note Thursday on the status of those negotiations, suggesting a deal could emerge within a "day or two."

"We want to make sure that we move a bill, as you do, as quickly as possible and get agreement with the Senate and move that bill to the president's desk," Hoyer said during a conversation on the floor with McCarthy.

Still, some Democrats remain wary that the delay in the sanctions bill risks giving the White House more time to twist House Republican arms.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), who has crafted a separate North Korea sanctions bill with Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.), said their plan would "apply a lot more economic pressure on" Pyongyang than the House bill McCarthy is pushing.

"I think the main thing is the need to do Russia sanctions now," Van Hollen added. "Some people suspect [Republicans] are using North Korea as the excuse to slow that down, so we'll see."

*Heather Caygle contributed to this report.*

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**Treasury fines ExxonMobil \$2 million for violating Russia sanctions while Tillerson was CEO** [Back](#)

By Victoria Guida and Ben Lefebvre | 07/20/2017 10:35 AM EDT

The Treasury Department and ExxonMobil locked horns in a legal battle Thursday, with the oil giant filing a lawsuit to stop a \$2 million [fine](#) the department slapped on it earlier in the day it for violating sanctions against Russia in 2014, when Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was head of the company.

Exxon named Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin in the complaint it filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas, putting the Trump administration in the awkward position of defending one Cabinet member against a lawsuit filed by a company formerly headed by another Cabinet member.

The fine is a pittance for ExxonMobil, which reported \$4 billion in earnings for the first quarter of this year, but it illustrates how the company's myriad business operations could complicate the job of the nation's top diplomat.

Tillerson has long spoken against the sanctions on Russia, arguing at an Exxon shareholder meeting the same month as the alleged violations that "we don't find them to be effective unless they are very well implemented comprehensively, and that's a very hard thing to do."

Just last month, he [argued](#) against toughening sanctions on Russia.

The heart of the dispute are eight contracts Exxon representatives signed with Igor Sechin, head of Russia's state-owned oil company Rosneft. Sechin is a close confidant of Russia President Vladimir Putin and is also named in the sanctions.

Exxon said the administration, in its previous explanation of the sanctions policy, made a distinction between actions taken by Sechin in his personal capacity, which were not permitted, as opposed to his professional capacity at Rosneft.

Treasury said there was no such legal distinction, adding that no materials from the White House or the department itself "asserted an exception or carve-out for the professional conduct of designated or block persons, nor did any materials suggest that U.S. persons could continue to conduct or engage in business with such individuals."

In a statement, company spokesman Scott Silvestri called the move "fundamentally unfair."

"ExxonMobil followed the clear guidance from the White House and Treasury Department when its representatives signed documents involving ongoing oil and gas activities in Russia with Rosneft — a nonblocked entity — that were countersigned on behalf of Rosneft by CEO Igor Sechin in his official representative capacity," Silvestri said.

He pointed to a statement on May 16, 2014, by a Treasury spokesperson, "who said by way of

example that BP's American CEO was permitted to participate in Rosneft board meetings with Sechin so long as the activity related to Rosneft's business and not Sechin's personal business."

Silvestri said the Treasury Department "is trying to retroactively enforce a new interpretation of an executive order that is inconsistent with the explicit and unambiguous guidance from the White House and Treasury issued before the relevant conduct."

Treasury, in its explanation of the action, said the company "is a sophisticated and experienced oil and gas company that has global operations and routinely deals in goods, services and technology subject to U.S. economic sanctions and U.S. export controls.

"OFAC determined that ExxonMobil did not voluntarily self-disclose the violations to OFAC, and that the violations constitute an egregious case," it added.

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#### **Bernhardt nomination to Interior clears Senate hurdle [Back](#)**

By Ben Lefebvre | 07/20/2017 03:37 PM EDT

The Senate voted 56-39 to invoke cloture on the nomination of Dave Bernhardt to the Interior Department's No. 2 position.

Six Democrats and independent Sen. [Angus King](#) of Maine voted along with Republicans to limit further debate on Bernhardt's nomination as Interior's deputy secretary. A confirmation vote is likely to come the evening of July 24.

Bernhardt has drawn fire from environmental and good-governance groups criticizing his past work as an oil and gas lobbyist and his time as Interior's solicitor under the George W. Bush administration.

He has more recently come under allegations of possibly violating lobbying disclosure laws. Bernhardt told senators he stopped lobbying on behalf of Westlands Water District after Nov. 18, 2016, but activists obtained emails under public records law showing Bernhardt continued to advise the district on legislation.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The Senate likely will vote July 24 to confirm Bernhardt.

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#### **Interior discrimination complaint data disappears after whistleblower filing [Back](#)**

By Esther Whieldon | 07/20/2017 06:47 PM EDT

Data on employee discrimination complaints at the Interior Department have disappeared from



the agency's website one day after an agency staffer filed a whistleblower complaint for being transferred from a senior position working on climate change to a job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies.

The [webpage](#) with the most recent data, as well as a link to the page that was on the agency's main website, were no longer visible Thursday, though at least some pages containing older data were still online. Section 201 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002, or the No FEAR Act, requires agencies to post summary data on employee discrimination complaints filed against it by employees and job applicants.

In a statement, Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift did not address whether the data had been intentionally removed. "The website has been experiencing some technical glitches today and we are working with our vendor to diagnose and resolve," she said in an email.

Previous versions of the webpage, including a [summary](#) of employee complaints, collected by POLITICO showed that 181 agency employees filed discrimination complaints in the first two quarters of the current fiscal year, which included one month that Secretary Ryan Zinke was in office.

Of that total, 84 complaints alleged the employees or job applicants had been retaliated against by the agency for unlisted reasons. The figures are roughly in line with the data from fiscal years 2012 through 2016, when the agency received an annual average of 176 complaints alleging retaliation and an average of 332 total complaints.

On Wednesday, a whistleblower [complaint](#) filed by Joel Clement contended that he had been reassigned to a desk job in the agency's royalty collection division to stop him from talking about the impacts of climate change on Alaska coastal communities. Clement was among dozens of senior executive staff Zinke moved to other positions in June.

Senate Energy and Natural Resources ranking Democrat [Maria Cantwell](#) (D-Wash.) earlier on Thursday [said](#) she is asking the Interior Department's inspector general to investigate the agency's employee reshuffle.

Editors' Note: The Interior Department restored the webpages shortly after this POLITICO story was published. Read more [here](#).

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**Interior restores webpage with employee discrimination complaint data [Back](#)**

By Esther Whieldon | 07/20/2017 07:31 PM EDT

The Interior Department has restored its webpage containing data on employee discrimination complaints.

The [webpage](#) with the most recent data on complaints was back up around 7 p.m., at least two

hours after POLITICO [observed](#) the page had disappeared. Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said in an email that the agency's equal opportunity office had "reorganized their website."

The discrimination complaints filed against the Interior Department by employees and job applicants had disappeared one day after a whistleblower [complaint](#) filed by Joel Clement contended that he had been reassigned to a desk job in the agency's royalty collection division to stop him from talking about the impacts of climate change on Alaska coastal communities.

Clement was among dozens of senior executive staff Zinke moved to other positions in June.

A link to the data that previously existed at the bottom of the agency's homepage had not been restored.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**Alaska's long road war** [Back](#)

By Andrew Restuccia | 04/04/2014 05:00 PM EDT

In the fall of 1998, Frank Murkowski took to the Senate floor to make an impassioned plea for the authority to build a one-lane gravel road from the isolated southwestern Alaska village of King Cove to a neighboring community with an all-weather airport.

"This is a road to life for the residents of King Cove," he said.

More than 15 years later, his daughter, Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski — along with the rest of the Alaska congressional delegation — is still fighting for the road, insisting it's the only viable way to ensure that King Cove's 965 largely native Alaskan residents have access to emergency medical care.

( [Also on POLITICO: Full transportation and infrastructure policy coverage](#) )

What seems like a simple request is anything but. The proposed road would cut through federally protected wilderness land in the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge, a 315,000-acre sanctuary near the tip of the Alaska Peninsula. And the Interior Department says the road would threaten vulnerable plants and animals that rely on the area's unique ecology.

The oftentimes ugly fight has pitted Alaska politicians against the federal government for decades, sowing mistrust and frustration. It has also reinforced the view of many in Alaska that policymakers in the Lower 48 are out of touch with their needs.

At the same time, the battle has laid bare tensions between Alaskan leaders and conservation groups, which argue that approving the road could set a dangerous national precedent in other protected wilderness areas.

Lisa Murkowski and Alaska Democratic Sen. Mark Begich, who faces a tight reelection fight,

are vowing to do everything in their power to win approval for the road, even though the Interior Department rejected the proposal late last year after a four-year analysis.

( [PHOTOS: 10 tough Senate races for Democrats](#))

Murkowski is using her position as the top Republican on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to elevate the issue, expressing her outrage at hearings and in floor speeches and holding a series of news conferences with King Cove residents. She has also [lambasted](#) Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, who [announced](#) the most recent rejection of the road just two days before Christmas.

"I am not willing to let a day go by without raising this as an issue," Murkowski said in an interview.

The road would give King Cove residents access to the larger airport in the nearby community of Cold Bay when extreme weather grounds flights at the smaller King Cove airport. King Cove has a medical clinic, but residents often have to travel to Anchorage for major procedures and emergencies.

The road, proponents argue, is the best solution to the transportation problems that have long plagued isolated King Cove.

Besides its small airport, the town has access by boat across the Izembek Lagoon, but foul weather can make air and boat travel difficult, residents say. Supporters of the road say at least 19 deaths over the years have resulted from plane crashes or an inability to obtain adequate medical care.

( [Sign up for POLITICO's Morning Transportation tip sheet](#))

Della Trumble, a King Cove resident and longtime advocate for the road, said its approval is a matter of life and death.

"I just feel strongly that the human factor far outweighs the wildlife," she said. "We will protect the wildlife. It's who we are."

Trumble and other residents have made dozens of trips to Washington to make their case, telling stories of family and friends who have been hurt or killed trying to get out of the community during storms. Trumble said she watched as her niece was flown out for a medical emergency amid winds of 70 to 80 mph. She said another niece was born on the galley table of a crab boat during an evacuation attempt.

Just this week, an injured fisherman was flown out of King Cove by the Coast Guard, marking the fifth medical evacuation of the year, according to [King Cove officials](#).

But opponents say the road would wreak havoc on the refuge and its wildlife. The refuge hosts more than 200 species, including caribou, grizzly bear and, in the fall, about 98 percent of the world's Pacific black brant. It also has one of the largest eelgrass beds on the planet and was one of the first areas in the U.S. to be designated as a [wetland of international importance](#).

"You can't punch a road through there without doing serious damage," said Don Barry, who served as Interior's assistant secretary for fish, wildlife and parks during the Clinton administration.

In addition, the proposed road faces major legal hurdles. In 1980, Congress designated most of the refuge as wilderness, the highest level of public land protection.

Barry, now a senior official at the conservation group Defenders of Wildlife, said it would be unprecedented to allow a road through a wilderness area. Though the refuge has some old military roads, they were built before the conservation laws were enacted.

Several opponents raised concerns that approving the road would lead to a push for development in other protected areas.

"Once you carve a road of this kind right through the middle of a national wildlife refuge, where does it stop?" former Clinton administration Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt asked.

Babbitt and other opponents have also suggested that the road could be used for commercial purposes, noting that Peter Pan Seafoods has a cannery in King Cove. "But despite pledges and promises to the contrary, the real purpose for building the road is the same as it ever was: moving fish and workers to and from King Cove's canneries," Babbitt wrote in the Los Angeles Times last month.

Peter Pan has rejected those accusations, and Murkowski notes that her legislation calling for approval of the road specifically bars using it for commercial purposes.

The fight over the road burst into public view in the late 1990s, when then-Sen. Frank Murkowski pushed legislation that would allow for approval of the road as part of a land exchange. The bill passed the Senate in 1998 but never passed the House. President Bill Clinton threatened a veto amid concerns about the road's effect on wildlife.

Soon after, then-Sen. Ted Stevens launched into a tense series of negotiations with the Interior Department. The resulting compromise was a \$37.5 million appropriation approved by Congress to improve the King Cove medical clinic and airport and make accommodations for a hovercraft to transport residents to Cold Bay. The hovercraft was used until 2011, but it is being sold because, operators said, it was too expensive to operate.

"Finally it was settled — and now it turns out it isn't," said Babbitt, who worked with Stevens to negotiate the deal and strongly opposed the road.

Within several years, the issue was back on the table. Lisa Murkowski included a provision in a 2009 bill calling on the Interior Department to analyze the road and proposing another land exchange. In exchange for setting aside land in the refuge for the road, the federal government would receive more than 43,000 acres of Alaska state land and more than 13,000 acres of land owned by the King Cove Native Corp.

The provision set off a four-year analysis by Interior that culminated in December with the department's rejection of the road.

"While the proposed land exchange would bring many more acres of land into the Refuge System, the analysis indicates that the increased acreage could not compensate for the unique values of existing refuge lands, nor the anticipated effects that the proposed road would have on wildlife, habitat, subsistence resources and wilderness values of the Refuge," the department said in a statement at the time.

The decision infuriated the Alaska delegation and has strained Murkowski's relationship with Jewell.

After hearing about the decision, Murkowski said she told Jewell, "I cannot forgive the fact that you have delivered this, that you have dashed all hope for the people of King Cove, and the fact that you did this the week of Christmas is absolutely callous and cold-hearted."

Other Alaska lawmakers have similarly taken Jewell to task. "If someone dies out of King Cove, I want you to really think about it and be ashamed of yourself," Rep. Don Young told Jewell at a hearing Thursday.

The road's opponents say viable alternatives exist — a notion that Murkowski and others reject. Opponents also argue that the road, which would snake through isolated land often battered by extreme weather, would pose its own dangers.

At a recent Senate hearing, Jewell said she is committed to working with King Cove residents to find alternatives. During a recent meeting with Begich, she said she will again listen to the community's concerns.

"Jewell committed to reviewing the information that the community plans to provide on the issue and to provide a response to the senators, State of Alaska and the community on their request to reconsider the final decision," Interior spokeswoman Jessica Kershaw said in an email.

Alaska lawmakers face major hurdles toward changing Interior's mind but say they're not giving up.

Begich said in a recent interview that he hopes to attach his bill approving the road to upcoming Interior appropriations legislation. Murkowski vowed to continue hammering away as well.

"This secretary has made a decision, and I think she thought the people of King Cove were tucked far enough away that nobody would be making a big deal about this," Murkowski said. "But I'm not forgetting them, and it's not just an idle threat."

*CORRECTION: A previous version of this story offered an incorrect name for the city where King Cove residents sometimes have to travel for major medical procedures.*

To view online [click here](#).

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**Clovis nomination is illegal, scientist group says** [Back](#)

By Helena Bottemiller Evich | 07/20/2017 11:38 AM EDT

The Union of Concerned Scientists today doubled down on its criticism of Sam Clovis, President Donald Trump's selection for chief scientist at USDA, saying that his lack of an ag-science background, is not just puzzling — it's illegal.

Federal statute stipulates that the nominee is to be chosen among "distinguished scientists with specialized training or significant experience in agricultural research, education, and economics."

The White House announced late Wednesday that Trump intended to nominate Clovis, former co-chair of his presidential campaign, to serve as USDA undersecretary of research, education and economics. Clovis, formerly a professor in the business administration department at Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, has been roundly panned over his lack of hard science chops. He has also made statements about climate science being bunk.

"This is another example of the Trump administration sidelining science and rejecting evidence-based decision-making, once again working against the interests of American farmers, rural communities and consumers," said Ricardo Salvador, director of the food and environment program at UCS. "If President Trump wants to keep Americans safe and healthy, ensure prosperity for farmers and rural communities, and follow the law, this nomination is the wrong choice."

While it certainly appears that the selection does not square with the requirements laid out in statute, it's far from clear who would have standing to take legal action, or whether any interest groups think it's worth the trouble.

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### **Supreme Court ruling means more Clean Water Act lawsuits are likely [Back](#)**

By Annie Snider | 05/31/2016 01:21 PM EDT

The Supreme Court opened the door to more lawsuits over the Clean Water Act in a Tuesday ruling that allowed businesses to challenge the federal government's decisions on which wetlands and streams it can regulate.

The ruling that Army Corps of Engineers wetland determinations are reviewable by courts also offers hints about the justices' leanings on broader, high-stakes questions about the law's reach that the high court will likely eventually consider in lawsuits over the Obama administration's Waters of the United States rule, which is being challenged by dozens of states, industry groups, activists and environmental nonprofits.

In Tuesday's case, *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers v. Hawkes Co., Inc.*, the eight active justices unanimously agreed that the determinations should be open to court review, but four offered concurring opinions outlining separate lines of reasoning for reaching that conclusion.

Justice Anthony Kennedy's opinion signaled major doubts about the government's power under the fundamental water law. After observing during oral arguments that the Clean Water Act is

perhaps "unconstitutionally vague," Kennedy wrote Tuesday that the law "continues to raise troubling questions regarding the Government's power to cast doubt on the full use and enjoyment of private property throughout the Nation." That could signal trouble for WOTUS, given that the rule is pegged squarely to Kennedy's opinion in a 2006 wetlands case that turned Clean Water Act regulation into a muddy mess.

"The fact that the ruling was unanimous shows that even the liberal justices will not automatically defer to the Obama administration's Clean Water Act policy interpretations which impact property rights," said Larry Liebesman, a senior adviser at Dawson and Associates and former Justice Department environmental attorney. "The ruling also suggests that the WOTUS rule will likely face similar scrutiny should it reach the Court."

The *Hawkes* decision is a big win for conservatives and property rights activists who have long challenged the federal government's broad reach under the Clean Water Act.

"Everyone who values property rights and access to justice should welcome this historic victory," Reed Hopper, an attorney with the Pacific Legal Foundation who argued the case for *Hawkes*, said in a statement. The foundation also successfully argued a 2012 wetlands case in which the high court unanimously ruled that EPA compliance orders are subject to judicial review, and is among the parties challenging the new water rule.

But environmentalists argued the *Hawkes* ruling underscored the need for WOTUS, also known as the Clean Water Rule. Jan Goldman-Carter, who leads wetlands work for the National Wildlife Federation, said that the corps' process "will get even more cumbersome and time consuming" if regulators have to continue making individual, case-by-case decisions about properties — now with the threat of a lawsuit hanging over each one. The new water rule, which an appeals court put on hold across the country, would place more streams and wetlands under federal protection automatically.

Hawkes Co., Inc., a peat-mining operation that had plans to mine a piece of property in Minnesota, brought the case after the Army Corps of Engineers said it would need permits because wetlands on the property were connected to the Red River of the North, roughly 120 miles away. The company argued that the process of obtaining a permit to mine the property would be prohibitively expensive, and fundamentally disagreed that the wetlands fell under federal regulation.

The Justice Department argued that the determinations are not final, binding agency decisions, and that applicants still have options after receiving a determination that their property is subject to Clean Water Act protections — namely that they can either proceed without a permit and, if the agency brings an enforcement action, challenge that in court, or they can apply for a permit and then seek judicial review of that.

Those options did not sit well with the court. "Neither alternative is adequate," Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in the lead opinion, which was joined by six of the seven other active justices.

In part, Roberts' opinion rested on a Memorandum of Agreement between the corps and EPA, which jointly administers the Clean Water Act, making the corps' jurisdictional determinations

"binding" for both agencies. This memorandum was key to Justice Elena Kagan, who appeared to lean toward the government during oral arguments, saying that both the federal government and regulated entities benefit from agencies being able to offer informal advice about how to interpret their regulations. In her concurring opinion, Kagan said that the memorandum "is central to the disposition of this case" because it creates a direct legal consequence to the jurisdictional determinations.

But Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg argued that the memorandum came from left field in oral arguments — indeed, the Justice Department's attorney had to fumble through his papers to figure out what the justices were referring to when it was first raised — and wasn't ready to rest her opinion on it. She was the only justice not to join Roberts' lead opinion, although she concurred in a separate opinion with the judgment that jurisdictional determinations are the government's final say on the issue, and thus should be reviewable under the Administrative Procedures Act.

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**Cc:** greg.gould@onrr.gov[greg.gould@onrr.gov]  
**From:** Treci Johnson  
**Sent:** 2017-07-21T08:25:38-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Fwd: CNN-I interview request for Joel Clement next week  
**Received:** 2017-07-21T08:25:46-04:00

Good Morning,

I'm forwarded this request to your office for response. If you have a statement you would like me to use, please let me know.

Thanks

Treci Johnson  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Office of Natural Resources Revenue  
202-469-2258 (Mobile)  
202-513-0611 (Office)  
[Treci.Johnson@onrr.gov](mailto:Treci.Johnson@onrr.gov)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Roobeek, Rosanne (NE)" <[Rosanne.Roobeek@turner.com](mailto:Rosanne.Roobeek@turner.com)>  
**Date:** July 21, 2017 at 7:04:58 AM EDT  
**To:** "[onrrpublicaffairs@onrr.gov](mailto:onrrpublicaffairs@onrr.gov)" <[onrrpublicaffairs@onrr.gov](mailto:onrrpublicaffairs@onrr.gov)>  
**Subject:** CNN-I interview request for Joel Clement next week

Dear press office,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am writing from CNN International's flagship global affairs interview programme "Amanpour" to see whether Joel Clement might be available for an interview with us next week.

CNN's Chief Correspondent and Anchor Christiane Amanpour would love to discuss his op-ed on Trump and climate with him.

Our show is live at 2pET, but we could pre-tape at an earlier time if live is not an option.

Amanpour is the highest profile platform our network has to offer. We have a reach of over 300 million homes globally on TV, while our online reach is unparalleled.

Would it be possible to arrange something?

Warm wishes,  
Rose

**Rosanne Roobeek**  
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**To:** Treci Johnson[treci.johnson@onrr.gov]  
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laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; greg.gould@onrr.gov[greg.gould@onrr.gov]  
**From:** Heather Swift  
**Sent:** 2017-07-21T08:26:20-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: CNN-I interview request for Joel Clement next week  
**Received:** 2017-07-21T08:26:31-04:00

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On Jul 21, 2017, at 8:25 AM, Treci Johnson <[treci.johnson@onrr.gov](mailto:treci.johnson@onrr.gov)> wrote:

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**Rosanne Roobeek**

Planning Desk I CNN International

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<image001.png>

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**From:** Treci Johnson  
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**Received:** 2017-07-21T08:33:46-04:00

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<image001.png>

**To:** Rydell, Kate M.[RydellKM@cbsnews.com]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-21T10:06:51-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: CBS EVENING NEWS QUERY RE JOEL CLEMENT  
**Received:** 2017-07-21T10:07:38-04:00

Thank you for your interest. Please see the Department's statement below.

**Regarding the op-ed:**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

**Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

-

Heather Swift  
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On Fri, Jul 21, 2017 at 9:41 AM, Rydell, Kate M. <[RydellKM@cbsnews.com](mailto:RydellKM@cbsnews.com)> wrote:

Hi, I am a producer with the CBS Evening News, working on a story for tonight's newscast about Joel Clement and his recent op-ed about being re-assigned from his job at DOI. Would you be able to provide someone for us to interview about his re-assignment? Have you already issued a statement on this subject?

Thank you so much..

Kate

KATE RYDELL/PRODUCER/CBS EVENING NEWS

202 457 4385



**To:** Scott Hommel[scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov]; Magallanes, Downey[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]; Laura Rigas[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; James Cason[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]; Micah Chambers[micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov]; Daniel Jorjani[daniel\_jorjani@ios.doi.gov]; Mashburn, Lori[lori\_mashburn@ios.doi.gov]; Bauserman, Christine[christine\_bauserman@ios.doi.gov]; Caroline Boulton[caroline\_boulton@ios.doi.gov]; Thiele, Aaron[aaron\_thiele@ios.doi.gov]; Willens, Todd[todd\_willens@ios.doi.gov]; Getto, Leila[leila\_getto@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Domenech, Douglas  
**Sent:** 2017-07-21T15:17:50-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Interior Cabinet Affairs report for 7/21/17  
**Received:** 2017-07-21T15:18:21-04:00  
[DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 7-21-17.docx](#)

Attached and copied below.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 7/21/17**

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor  
Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

**MADE IN AMERICA VIDEO:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnP854sChGo>

**Status of the Secretary**

TODAY: The Secretary is in Colorado.  
CO Area/Regional Leadership Meeting & Luncheon.  
Tour USGS Core Research Center  
Tour USGS TRIGA Nuclear Reactor  
Denver Area DOI All Hands Meeting  
Colorado Republican Committee Round Table  
Remarks at Western Conservative Summit.  
SATURDAY:  
Meeting with Rocky Mountain National Park Superintendent  
Return Travel.

**NEXT WEEK:**

Sunday: DC  
Monday: WV. Boy Scouts POTUS event, potential D.C. mayor tour  
Tuesday: Ohio American Heroes POTUS event.  
Wednesday: DC-->El Paso, TX  
Thursday: Las Cruces, NM  
Friday: Las Cruces, NM  
Saturday: Santa Fe, NM / Sabinoso Wilderness

NOTE: the Secretary will be on personal leave August 5-19 out of the country.

**Media TODAY**

**MONUMENT REVIEW: SECRETARY ZINKE RECOMMENDS NO MODIFICATIONS TO CANYONS OF THE ANCIENTS**

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke announced Colorado's

Canyons of the Ancients National Monument is no longer under review and that he will recommend that no modifications be made to the monument. The monuments were under review in accordance with [President Donald J. Trump's April 26, 2017, executive order](#). The recommendation comes after review of public comments and conversations with stakeholders.

"When the President and I began the monument review process we absolutely realized that not all monuments are the same and that not all monuments would require modifications. Today I'm announcing that Canyon of the Ancients National Monument review process has concluded and I am recommending no changes be made to the monument," **said Secretary Zinke**. "Canyons of the Ancients is gorgeous land, but its monument status as the most high-density Native American archaeological sites in the Nation is clear. The history at this site spans thousands of years, and the federal protection of these objects and history will help us preserve this site for a thousand more years."

## **RECLAMATION ANNOUNCES GRANTS FOR WATERSMART SMALL-SCALE WATER EFFICIENCY PROJECTS IN 15 STATES**

### **\$3.6 MILLION IN RECLAMATION GRANTS WILL BE LEVERAGED WITH LOCAL AND STATE FUNDING TO SUPPORT \$7.47 MILLION IN EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS**

WASHINGTON –The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation announced today that it has selected 57 Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects in 15 states to receive a total of \$3.6 million as part of the WaterSMART grants program. The WaterSMART grants are leveraged with local and state funding to support \$7.47 million in efficiency improvements.

### **INTERIOR PROVIDES \$409,885 TO GUAM TO MITIGATE INFESTATIONS OF THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE AND LITTLE FIRE ANT; PROTECT NATURAL RESOURCES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 21, 2017) – Interior Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Nikolao Pula made available \$409,885 to preserve natural and cultural resources and protect against invasive species on Guam.

"We are especially pleased that Congress was able to provide some extra funding in FY 2017 to mitigate and control the coconut rhinoceros beetle and little fire ant on Guam," said Pula. "All funding supports Governor Eddie Calvo's efforts in protecting Guam's natural resources now and for the future."

### **INTERIOR PROVIDES \$189,881 TO NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS TO DEVELOP STAFF IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT; TEACH YOUTH IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION; STRENGTHEN EFFORTS TO CLEAN UP GARAPAN WATERSHED FY 2017 GRANTS PROTECT NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 21, 2017) – This week Interior Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Nikolao Pula has made available \$189,881 for natural and cultural resource protection in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

"We are pleased to support Governor Ralph Torres's team in shoring up management plans

and prioritize efforts around natural resource protection,” said Pula. “We are also pleased to support a non-governmental organization that is working towards the same goals by training youth. All efforts are critical to the future of the CNMI.”

**INTERIOR PROVIDES \$103,000 TO THE U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS TO MANAGE AND MITIGATE HARMFUL RED ALGAE ON CORALS AND SUPPORT REEF RESPONSIBLE SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD INITIATIVE**

**FY 2017 GRANTS PROTECT NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 21, 2017) – Interior Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Nikolao Pula made available \$103,000 for natural and cultural resource protection in the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI).

“We are pleased to support Governor Kenneth Mapp and his administration in their efforts to protect the coral reef and viability of seafood resources in the U.S. Virgin Islands,” said Pula. “These projects will help Virgin Islanders protect their unique resources by addressing some of the current threats.”

**INTERIOR PROVIDES \$635,885 FOR NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION IN MICRONESIA REGION**

Interior Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Nikolao Pula has made available \$635,885 for natural and cultural resource protection for all U.S. island jurisdictions in the Micronesia region.

“It is reassuring to see the range of initiatives we have been able to support with this funding, from managing fisheries that support people’s livelihoods to suppressing the impacts of the damaging Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle and Little Fire Ant,” said Pula. “We are happy to support and bolster the collaborative efforts of conservation-minded leaders across the Micronesia region.”

**INTERIOR PROVIDES \$94,906 TO AMERICAN SAMOA TO PROTECT CORAL REEFS, WATERSHEDS; BUILD CAPACITY IN GIS MAPPING, RADAR SURVEILLANCE FY 2017 GRANTS PROTECT NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 21, 2017) – Interior Acting Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Nikolao Pula made available \$94,906 for natural and cultural resource protection in American Samoa.

“We are pleased to support Governor Lolo Moliga and the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources team in their efforts to preserve natural ecosystems vital to American Samoa’s environment and the people’s livelihood,” said Pula. “American Samoa’s natural resources are highly vulnerable to the impacts of land-based pollution, illegal near-shore fishing and changes in climate for which this funding is greatly needed.”

**DOI COMMS REPORT**

**Press Inquiries:**

- ☐ Many logistical and small inquires.

□ Washington Post, The Hill, NPR, others - REQUEST-- Writing today on Joel Clement and his "whistleblower" OpEd. I'd like to speak to someone at DOI for a response to his allegations and also comment about the wisdom of reassigning various senior personnel to positions for which their expertise does not appear relevant. Can you help me with that?--RESPONSE- Regarding the op-ed: The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter. Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI: The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees. The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency. Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

□ Reuters - REQUEST-- I'm inquiring about the process of NEPA. Specifically whether Border Patrol is adhering to protocols of NEPA compliance regarding the recent announcement of a border wall to be built at the Santa Ana NWR.—RESPONSE-- The Department of the Interior (DOI) is one of several federal agencies that U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has engaged with to implement the President's Executive Order (EO) 13767 - Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements. CBP has included DOI in initial discussions regarding the implementation of the EO in south Texas. For inquiries, please contact U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Office of Public Affairs at [cbpmediarelations@cbp.dhs.gov](mailto:cbpmediarelations@cbp.dhs.gov)

□ NY Times – REQUEST - 1. Is there a date for when Secretary Zinke will make his official recommendation to the President re Bears Ears? If so, what is it, and if not, why not and what is the time frame being considered? 2. How does DOI respond to the charge that there is no legal precedent for changing the designation of a national monument? 3. Given how much the outdoor rec industry contributes to the economy, what is the rationale for reducing the size of Bears Ears? 4. Do you feel the outdoor rec industry is being unreasonable in considering the reduction of Bears Ears? How have the conversations gone?—RESPONSE-- 1.The formal review period lasts 120 days (ends August 24), which is outlined in the executive order. There is not a mandated date for announcing recommendations. Two monuments that are no longer under review were announced last week. 2. Monuments have been modified by presidents on a number of occasions by both republican and democrat administrations. Furthermore, it's important to note that the Administration and Congress will work together on land management decisions. Using Bears Ears as an example, the Secretary recommended that Congress take action to set aside land as a national recreation area and also to officially establish Tribal co-management (co-management can only be granted by Congress, not the executive branch). 3. There is absolutely no reduction in the amount of public land. The land was federal land before the monument designation and if the boundaries of the monument are

modified, the land would still be public land, managed by the agency that previously managed it. In the example of Bears Ears the land is managed by the Bureau of Land Management even if the land was not designated a monument it would still be managed by the BLM. Recreation and access to public lands is a major pillar of the Secretary's policy agenda and recreation will always be a major part of public lands under this administration. 4. See previous answer. The Department has had dozens of conversations with various outdoor recreation industry representatives and has heard a number of different sides of the issue from these stakeholders. The one thing that everyone agrees with the Secretary on though is that public access and outdoor recreation is a top priority.

☐ Reuters – REQUEST - Am working on a story for Reuters in which enviros allege the attached memo from Dep Sec Virginia Johnson shows Interior is seeking to reverse regs that prohibit, among other things, spotlighting and baiting tied to hunting on national preserve lands in Alaska. Would you kindly: 1. confirm the memo is authentic; and 2. provide or decline comment on enviros' claims? – RESPONSE – tbd....

### **Top Stories**

- ☐ Washington Post: I'm a scientist. I'm blowing the whistle on the Trump Administration
- ☐ Alaska Dispatch News: Trump names Alaskan to Interior Department post
- ☐ Washington Post: Agency works to deliver on Trump's energy industry campaign promises

### **Top Issues and Accomplishments**

Interior is announcing new hires this week, with press releases going out on a case-by-case basis.

Interior Secretary Zinke Applauds Nomination of Alaska's Joe Balash as Assistant Secretary for Land and Mineral

Today, Secretary Zinke is traveling to Denver to visit the DOI office and speak to employees. Zinke will speak at the American Legislative Exchange Council, and the Western Conservative Summit. Topics at both events will include deregulation, energy, being a good land manager, federalism.

On Saturday, Secretary Zinke will tour Rocky Mountain National Park, and hold a media availability that afternoon. He will announce \$30 million in Centennial Challenge grants with matching funds for national parks across the country.

### **Secretarial-level Announcements/Events/Interviews**

- ☐ Next Monday the Secretary will join POTUS in WV at the Boy Scout Jamboree and then a potential D.C. mayor tour. Tuesday: Ohio POTUS event. Wednesday he will start his monument tour of New Mexico and then Nevada.
- ☐ July 18: Department-level Release: DOI/NPS announce Outdoor Legacy Partnership grant package – \$13.3 Million for Improvements to Local Parks and Recreation in underserved communities
- ☐ July 22: Department-level Release: Secretary Zinke to announce that \$48 million through the Centennial Challenge Project in high priority maintenance and infrastructure

projects at 42 parks in 29 states. Congress provided \$17.7 million for the projects as part of the program which will be matched by \$30.9 million from more than 50 park partners to improve trails, restore buildings, and increase visitor access to parks.

#### National Park Service

- ☐ July 21: National NPS Release: NPS announces new regional director for Northeast Region.
- ☐ July 24: Local NPS Release: Denali National Park will issue an environmental assessment on Milepost 231 Wayside and Trail Connections. This project for parking, trailheads, and a new trail connection is the NPS portion of a partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the Federal Highways Administration to enhance safety for pedestrians and other non-motorists in the area in conjunction with a bridge replacement over the Nenana River.
- ☐ Week of July 24: Local NPS Release: The Reconstruction Era National Monument will hold three public listening sessions (not related to July 28 Reconstruction Era Theme Study) in Beaufort, Port Royal, and St. Helena Island, South Carolina, as part of the development of a foundation document for this new park. Targeted stakeholder meetings will also be held in the respective communities during the day to identify the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the National Park Service in setting up these new areas and also provide input into the development of the foundation document and interpretive themes.
- ☐ July 25: Local NPS Release: The National Park Service will announce a 30-day public comment period on the Glacier National Park Lake McDonald Properties Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA). Following the public review and comment period, the park will prepare a formal decision document. The EA analyzes alternatives to manage NPS-owned properties, including buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, adjacent to Lake McDonald. The proposed alternative uses an adaptive approach that identifies a sequence of management options for each property, which for most properties begins with historic leasing, park or concessioner use, or stabilization of properties. The last option in the adaptive management approach would be removal of buildings. The management plan has garnered local media and public interest with little to no controversy and a lot of interest in leasing the properties.
- ☐ TBD: National NPS Release: NPS announcement of annual Rutgers report on NPS Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program economic impact. Tax credits 2016 contributed \$12.3 billion in output to the U.S. economy, added \$6.2 billion in GDP. Historic preservation tax incentives encourage investments in historic preservation and revitalization of communities small and large across the country.

#### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- ☐ July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will announce it has apportioned \$50 million to state fish and wildlife agencies for developing and implementing programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats. The funding is provided through the FWS's State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program and is distributed through an apportionment formula in accordance with the Appropriations Act.
- ☐ July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a final rule establishing the 2017-18

hunting seasons and bag limits for certain migratory game birds to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.

□ July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to establish annual hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds for the 2018-19 hunting season to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.

□ July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to approve the shot for hunting waterfowl and coots. FWS has concluded that this type of shot left in the terrestrial or aquatic environments is unlikely to adversely affect fish, wildlife, or their habitats. Approving this shot formulation would increase the nontoxic shot options for hunters. Interested stakeholders include the Flyway Councils, state wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations and hunters.

□ TBD: FWS Local Release: FWS plans to announce the notice of availability of the revised draft recovery plan for the giant garter snake in California. There may be some controversy with cost estimates associated with this plan.

#### Bureau of Land Management

□ July 24: BLM-AZ will meet with young leaders from 19 African countries who are part of the State Department's Mandela Fellowship to discuss public land issues and challenges.

□ Week of July 24: Local BLM Release: BLM-CO Little Snake Field Office will announce a 30-day public scoping period for an environmental assessment evaluating a coal Lease by Application (LBA) from Peabody Energy's Twentymile Coal Foidel Creek Mine near Hayden. The LBA is for 640 acres of federal coal underneath private surface. The coal would be mined by underground methods with no surface disturbance. The mine estimates it could recover 4.1 million tons of coal, generating approximately \$13 million in royalties, half of which would go to the state. The lease would help the mine continue to employ 365 people.

□ July 18 and 25: Local BLM Release: BLM-Eastern States, in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service, will hold public meetings in St. Paul, MN, and Virginia, MN, to solicit comments regarding the proposed 20-year withdrawal of 234,328 acres of Federal minerals from national forest system lands on the Superior National Forest within the Rainy River Watershed. Public comments received during project scoping will inform development of an EIS to study the proposed mineral withdrawal.

□ July 21 -26: The sage-grouse task force team comprised of BLM, USGS, USFWS, USFS, and Western Governors' offices will work in four subgroups to review a draft plan in response to S.O. 3353. The subgroups pertain to plan and policy review, fire and invasive species, data and science and wildlife management.

□ July 25 – 26: Local BLM Release: BLM-WY Pinedale and Rock Springs field offices will hold two open houses to discuss the Normally Pressured Lance Natural Gas Development Project with local communities. Public comments will be collected on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement released last week.

□ July 26: BLM acting Deputy Director for Operations John Ruhs will attend the Nevada

Sheriffs' Association meeting and provide a "BLM 101" presentation.

□ July 26: BLM-AK will participate in the annual Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) forum, focusing on issues that relate to potential sites within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and contaminated lands and mine sites in Alaska.

□ July 26: BLM-CA Bishop Field Office will meet with representatives from Mono County, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and a private landowner to discuss riparian habitat improvement for bi-state sage-grouse through alterations in county road maintenance and installation of culverts and drainage dips.

#### Bureau of Reclamation

□ July 20 or 21: BOR National Release: BOR announces \$3.6 Million for WaterSMART small-scale efficiency projects in 15 western states.

□ July 24-25: Reclamation will meet with stakeholders in Klamath Falls, Oregon, to kick off the stakeholder engagement process on the reinitiated ESA consultation on Klamath Project Operations. Organizations expected to attend the meeting include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Yurok Tribe, Karuk Tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, The Klamath Tribes, Klamath Water Users Association, and PacifiCorps.

#### Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

□ July 26 (tent.): BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Notice to Stakeholders on the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Cape Wind Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).

□ TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Note to Stakeholders on Information Transfer Meeting to be held in New Orleans August 22-24.

#### Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

□ July 21: BSEE News Brief: Made in America Week article will highlight jobs in the U.S. supported by OCS production.

#### Office of Insular Affairs

□ July 25: Hearing before the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, regarding the LBJ Hospital in American Samoa.

□ July 25 or 26: Local IA Release: Marshall Islands grants release announces Compact Infrastructure \$149,436; Ebeye Special Needs \$300,000; Health Care Program for four Atolls (Sec 177) \$697,387.

#### CONGRESSIONAL

N/A

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#### Political Appointee Update

DOI's politicals on board = 45

5 awaiting confirmation.

Deputy Secretary nominee David Bernhardt is expected to be voted on in the Senate on Monday.

Nominees Combs, Berman, and Domenech participated in a Senate hearing on Thursday.



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**Speaking Invitations**

**Accepted**

7/21 - Western Conservative Summit (Denver, CO)

7/22-29 National Monument Review Tour Nevada and New Mexico

8/5-20 Personal

**Outstanding Invitations in Process**

8/22 - 2017 Lake Tahoe Summit invited by Sen. Feinstein and Sen. Heller (Lake Tahoe, CA)

8/25-26 - Steamboat Institute's 9th Annual Freedom Conference & Festival (Steamboat Springs, CO)

8/30 - West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (White Sulphur Springs, WV)

**Declining**

7/22 National Association of Counties Annual Conference (Columbus, OH) (NOTE: declining for S-1 but offering a surrogate)

7/23-26 - Aspen Institute Forum on Global Energy, Economy, and Security (Aspen, CO)

7/23 National Boy Scout Jamboree (Glen Jean, WV)

7/31-8/2 - FBI National Academy Associates Annual Training Conference (DC)

8/2 - American Legion Northwest Regional Baseball Tournament's Opening Ceremony General Welcome (Missoula, MT)

8/5 - Glacier National Park Conservancy remarks at Annual Backpacker's Ball (Whitefish/Kalispell)

8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)

8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)

8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)

-  
**Emergency Management**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that several National Wildlife Refuges were affected by a round of severe thunderstorms that produced tornadoes and localized flooding in Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. Cumulative rain totals in some areas are as high as 10 inches. The Upper Mississippi River Wildlife and Fish Refuge, Trempealeau NWR, LaCrosse District, Upper Mississippi River NWR, and McGregor District, Upper Mississippi River NWR were affected, with the McGregor District lending clean-up support to the town of McGregor. The Winona District, Upper Mississippi River NWR assisted in search and rescue efforts along the river. All employees have been accounted for, though some employee homes are reportedly damaged.

USGS deployed five crews to collect high flow measurements in southwestern Wisconsin. The main rivers affected are the Kickapoo, Trempealeau, Baraboo, Pecatonica, and LaCrosse.

In California, the Detwiler Fire, located in Mariposa County (CAL FIRE), has burned 70,596 (+22,596) acres and is 10 (+3)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 3,737 (+562) personnel, including 68 (+32) DOI personnel. There are 1,500 (no change) residential structures threatened and 4,968 (no change) evacuees.

The fire threatens the Mariposa Public Utility District water supply and critical communication infrastructure on Fremont Peak. Fifty residences have been destroyed. Full containment is expected on August 5.

In Lassen County, California, (BLM) the Long Valley Fire has burned 83,733 (no change) acres and is 91 (+20)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 IMT with 489 (-187) personnel assigned, including 84 (-52) DOI personnel. There are 0 (-75) residential structures threatened. Containment is expected on July 25.

In Nevada, the Four Seasons Complex has burned 159,986 (+4,489) acres. The fire is 85 (+10)-percent contained and managed by a Type-2 IMT with 460 (-76) personnel assigned, including 60 (+6) DOI personnel. Fifteen (+15) responders associated with the Incident Command Post have been listed as injured due to flu-like symptoms. Full containment is expected on July 24.

The Grass Valley Fire in Pershing County, Nevada, (BLM) has burned 11,590 (no change) acres and is 88 (+38)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 IMT with 230 (+31) personnel, including 59 (+18) DOI personnel. Full containment is expected on July 21.

Also, in Nevada, the MM155 Fire in Pershing County (BLM) has burned 22,360 acres and is 97-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 IMT with 41 personnel assigned, with no DOI personnel, and the fire is expected to be contained later today.

In South Dakota, the Wanblee Timber Fire in Jackson County (BIA) has burned 5,305 (no change) acres and is 78 (no change)-percent contained. The fire is currently managed by a Type-2 IMT with 44 (-129) personnel, including 17 (-10) DOI personnel. The Wanblee and Georgetown communities, as well as cultural sites, are threatened by the fire. There are 20 (no change) evacuees. One unoccupied residence has been destroyed. Full containment is expected on July 29.

### **Outside Media of Interest**

#### **Trump Administration Cancels Hundreds Of Obama-Era Regulations.**

The Washington Post (7/20, Eilperin, Paletta) reports that OMB on Thursday described “how it would jettison hundreds of existing or planned regulations as part of its larger push to ease federal restrictions on the private sector.” The agency issued a list that “shows the extent to which this administration is determined to erase many of the Obama administration’s policy priorities.” In all, the Administration “said it was pulling or suspending 860 pending regulations” including 469 that “were being completely withdrawn” and 391 that were “being set aside or reevaluated.”

#### **Interior Dept. Ordered Glacier Park Chief, Other Climate Expert Pulled From Zuckerberg Tour.**

The Washington Post (7/20, Rein) reports that days before Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg’s visit to Glacier National Park on Saturday “to tour the melting ice fields that have become the poster child for climate change’s effects on Montana’s northern Rockies,” the Trump Administration “abruptly removed two of the park’s top climate experts from a delegation scheduled to show him around, telling a research ecologist and the park

superintendent that they were no longer going to participate in the tour.” The Post calls the “decision to micromanage” Zuckerberg’s visit “highly unusual – even for a celebrity visit,” and points out that the Facebook founder, along “with the broader tech community in Silicon Valley has positioned himself as a vocal critic of President Trump.”

#### **Dem To Seek Investigation Into Interior Staff Reassignments.**

The Hill (7/20, Cama) reports that Sen. Maria Cantwell “wants an investigation into an Interior Department employee’s claim that he was reassigned due to his work on climate change.” Cantwell “said at a Thursday hearing that she would officially ask Interior’s inspector general to look into the matter.” Cantwell’s “request came a day after Joel Clement, the former director of Interior’s Office of Policy Analysis, wrote a Washington Post op-ed saying he was improperly reassigned to an accounting position because of his work on helping Alaskan communities cope with climate change.”

#### **Alaskan Joe Balash Nominated For Senior Interior Department Post.**

The Fairbanks (AK) News-Miner (7/20, Friedman) reports that the Interior Department “announced Thursday that President Donald Trump intends to nominate Joe Balash to serve as the department’s Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said, “It’s been a long time since the Department had an Assistant Secretary from Alaska, and the president’s nomination of Joe Balash further proves his commitment to Alaska and rural America as a whole. Joe is no stranger to the Department of the Interior having worked alongside the department on a number of projects in Alaska. He brings an incredible combination of state and federal experience to the table, and he will be very effective in helping the department work with Congress to do the work of the American people. I look forward to his speedy confirmation in the Senate.”

#### **NC Governor On Trump Drilling Plan: ‘Not Off Our Coast’.**

The AP (7/12) reports that “under pressure from President Donald Trump, North Carolina’s governor announced his opposition on Thursday to drilling for natural gas and oil off the Atlantic coast, saying it poses too much of a threat to the state’s beaches and tourism economy.” Ahead of “a Friday deadline for comment from elected officials on the Trump administration’s request for companies to perform seismic testing under Atlantic waters, Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper held a news conference at a coastal state park to announce he’ll be registering the state’s opposition.” Cooper said, “There is a threat looming over this coastline that we love and the prosperity it brings, and that’s the threat of offshore drilling.” He continued, “As governor, I’m here to speak out and take action against it. I can sum it up in four words: ‘not off our coast.’”

#### **House Clears Path For Alaska’s Long-awaited King Cove Road.**

The Washington Times (7/20, Wolfgang) reports that the House of Representatives passed 248 to 179 a bill authorizing a “massive land swap” between the state of Alaska and the federal government that would allow for the construction of a road connecting King Cove, Alaska – an isolated community accessible only by water or air – to nearby Cold Bay. Under the legislation, tens of thousands of acres of state land would be exchanged for several hundred acres of the Izembek Wildlife Refuge, through which the road would run. President Trump “appears ready and willing” to sign the bill.

**Federal Register Listings**

Items cleared for the FR on Thursday.

REG0007192 BIA Indian Gaming; Extension of Tribal-State Class III Gaming Compact (Rosebud Sioux Tribe and State of South Dakota). This Notice announces the extension of a Class III gaming compact between the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and the State of South Dakota by written agreement of the parties. The extension is from July 31, 2017, to January 28, 2018. Notice 07/20/2017.

REG0007194 BIA Indian Gaming; Approval of an Amendment to a Tribal-State Class III Gaming Compact in the State of Washington. This Notice announces the approval of the Fifth Amendment to the Tribal State Compact for the Class III Gaming between the Squaxin Island Tribe of the Squaxin Island Reservation and the State of Washington. Notice 07/20/2017.

REG0007183 NPS Agency Information Collection Activities: Procedures for State, Tribal, and Local Plans and Grants. This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA), announces that the NPS will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of an information collection for the National Historic Preservation Partnership (NHPP) Program and Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants. The NPS is requesting public comments on the proposed information collection for 60 days. Notice 07/20/2017.

**WOLF TRAP**

Tickets in the Secretary's box available. Please share with WH staff.

7-22-17	The Legend of Zelda: Symphony of the Goddesses	8:30 PM
7-23-17	Rebelution	6:30 PM
7-25-17	Diana Ross	8:00 PM

Doug Domenech  
Senior Advisor  
US Department of the Interior

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

**To:** Marsh, Rene[Rene.Marsh@turner.com]  
**Cc:** Hinson, Alex[alex\_hinson@ios.doi.gov]; Bloomgren, Megan[megan\_bloomgren@ios.doi.gov]; Ross, Paul[paul\_ross@ios.doi.gov]; Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-21T16:03:51-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: CNN  
**Received:** 2017-07-21T16:04:58-04:00

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

-

Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

On Fri, Jul 21, 2017 at 3:56 PM, 'Marsh, Rene' via Interior Press <[interior\\_press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:interior_press@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Hello,

CNN spoke with DOI employee Joel Clement. We understand he was reassigned to the accounting department. Mr. Clement is a scientist by trade. Could DOI explain why he was reassigned to accounting without accounting experience?

How many other DOI employees have been reassigned?

Clement says he was retaliated against for speaking out against climate change. Is this true?

Also, we are at the 6 month mark under the new administration. CNN is interested in hearing how DOI believes science and the environment has fared under the Trump administration so far?

Thanks,

— René Marsh

CNN

Correspondent

Twitter: @Rene\_MarshCNN

Office: 202- 777-7249

**To:** 'Swift, Heather'[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Rydell, Kate M.  
**Sent:** 2017-07-21T18:20:47-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** RE: CBS EVENING NEWS QUERY RE JOEL CLEMENT  
**Received:** 2017-07-21T18:21:00-04:00

Thank you very much,  
Kate

**From:** Swift, Heather [mailto:heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 21, 2017 10:07 AM  
**To:** Rydell, Kate M. <RydellKM@cbsnews.com>  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov  
**Subject:** Re: CBS EVENING NEWS QUERY RE JOEL CLEMENT

Thank you for your interest. Please see the Department's statement below.

**Regarding the op-ed:**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

**Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

-

Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

On Fri, Jul 21, 2017 at 9:41 AM, Rydell, Kate M. <[RydellKM@cbsnews.com](mailto:RydellKM@cbsnews.com)> wrote:

Hi, I am a producer with the CBS Evening News, working on a story for tonight's newscast about Joel Clement and his recent op-ed about being re-assigned from his job at DOI. Would you be able to provide someone for us to interview about his re-assignment? Have you already issued a statement on this subject?

Thank you so much..

Kate

KATE RYDELL/PRODUCER/CBS EVENING NEWS  
202 457 4385



**To:** Rodriguez, Jesse (NBCUniversal)[Jesse.Rodriguez@nbcuni.com]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Heather Swift  
**Sent:** 2017-07-23T16:29:15-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Joel Clement / Morning Joe  
**Received:** 2017-07-23T16:29:26-04:00

**Regarding the op-ed:**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

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Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 23, 2017, at 1:11 PM, Rodriguez, Jesse (NBCUniversal)  
<[Jesse.Rodriguez@nbcuni.com](mailto:Jesse.Rodriguez@nbcuni.com)> wrote:

Hello.

We will have DOI employee & scientist Joel Clement on Morning Joe tomorrow in the 8am hour.

Have you released a statement in response to his Wash Post op-ed from last week?

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/amhtml/opinions/im-a-scientist-the-trump-administration-reassigned-me-for-speaking-up-about-climate-change/2017/07/19/389b8dce-6b12-11e7-9c15-177740635e83\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/amhtml/opinions/im-a-scientist-the-trump-administration-reassigned-me-for-speaking-up-about-climate-change/2017/07/19/389b8dce-6b12-11e7-9c15-177740635e83_story.html)

Thanks,  
Jesse

**To:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Rodriguez, Jesse (NBCUniversal)  
**Sent:** 2017-07-23T16:29:59-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** RE: Joel Clement / Morning Joe  
**Received:** 2017-07-23T16:30:06-04:00

Thank you.

---

**From:** Heather Swift [mailto:heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 23, 2017 4:29 PM  
**To:** Rodriguez, Jesse (NBCUniversal) <Jesse.Rodriguez@nbcuni.com>  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov  
**Subject:** Re: Joel Clement / Morning Joe

**Regarding the op-ed:**

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[https://www.washingtonpost.com/amhtml/opinions/im-a-scientist-the-trump-administration-reassigned-me-for-speaking-up-about-climate-change/2017/07/19/389b8dce-6b12-11e7-9c15-177740635e83\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/amhtml/opinions/im-a-scientist-the-trump-administration-reassigned-me-for-speaking-up-about-climate-change/2017/07/19/389b8dce-6b12-11e7-9c15-177740635e83_story.html)

Thanks,  
Jesse

**To:** Mashburn, John K. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]; Flynn, Matthew (b)(6) gov]; Uli, Gabriella M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]; Murphy, Christine M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]; Paranzino, Anthony M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]  
**From:** Domenech, Douglas  
**Sent:** 2017-07-24T15:39:46-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Interior Cabinet Affairs Report for 7/24/17  
**Received:** 2017-07-24T15:40:15-04:00  
[DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 7-24-17.docx](#)

Attached and copied below.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 7/24/17**

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor  
Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

**Status of the Secretary**

TODAY: The Secretary is in Washington and will travel to WV with POTUS.  
Meeting with DJ Gribbin at EEOB.  
Lunch with Ambassadorial nominee to Portugal George Glass.  
Meeting with Louisiana Delegation (Rep. Graves, Rep. Higgins, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Abraham).  
Travel to West Virginia for Boy Scouts event with POTUS.

**THIS WEEK:**

Tuesday: HOLD: Rural Prosperity Task Force Principals Breakfast; Meeting with Philip Howard, Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling; Call with Rep. Costa; Call with Senator Schatz; Travel to Ohio, American Heroes POTUS event.  
Wednesday: Hold for Sen. Merkley; Tour with Mayor Bowser; Meeting with Rep. Aderholt and James Swanson; Travel to El Paso, TX. (political event)  
Thursday: Las Cruces, NM Monuments Tour  
Friday: Las Cruces, NM; Monuments Tour  
Saturday: Santa Fe, NM / Sabinoso Wilderness

NOTE: the Secretary will be on personal leave August 5-19 out of the country.

**Media TODAY**

**(Saturday) SECRETARY ZINKE AND COLORADO SENATOR GARDNER ANNOUNCE MORE THAN \$50 MILLION FOR NATIONAL PARKS INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**NPS Centennial Challenge Program is Matching \$20 Million in Congressional Funding with \$33 Million from Partner Organizations to Support Maintenance Projects at National Parks**

**WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Colorado Senator Cory Gardner announced today that the National Park Service is teaming up with partners across the nation to distribute nearly \$50 million in high priority maintenance and infrastructure projects at 42 parks in 29 states. Congress provided \$20 million for the projects as part of the Centennial Challenge program which will be matched by \$33 million from more than 50 park partners to improve trails, restore buildings, and increase visitor access to parks.**

**Secretary Zinke and Senator Gardner made the announcement while visiting Rocky Mountain National Park, which will receive \$200,000 in federal funds matched by \$200,000 from the Rocky Mountain Conservancy to reduce deferred maintenance on the Alluvial Fan Trail.**

**(Potential) Zinke on confirmation of Bernhardt.**

### **DOI COMMS REPORT**

Secretarial-level Announcements/Events/Interviews

- Next Monday the Secretary will join POTUS in WV at the Boy Scout Jamboree and then a potential D.C. mayor tour. Tuesday: Ohio POTUS event. Wednesday he will start his monument tour of New Mexico and then Nevada.

### **National Park Service**

- July 24: Local NPS Release: Denali National Park will issue an environmental assessment on Milepost 231 Wayside and Trail Connections. This project for parking, trailheads, and a new trail connection is the NPS portion of a partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the Federal Highways Administration to enhance safety for pedestrians and other non-motorists in the area in conjunction with a bridge replacement over the Nenana River.
- Week of July 24: Local NPS Release: The Reconstruction Era National Monument will hold three public listening sessions (not related to July 28 Reconstruction Era Theme Study) in Beaufort, Port Royal, and St. Helena Island, South Carolina, as part of the development of a foundation document for this new park. Targeted stakeholder meetings will also be held in the respective communities during the day to identify the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the National Park Service in setting up these new areas and also provide input into the development of the foundation document and interpretive themes.
- July 25: Local NPS Release: The National Park Service will announce a 30-day public comment period on the Glacier National Park Lake McDonald Properties Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA). Following the public review and comment period, the park will prepare a formal decision document. The EA analyzes alternatives to manage NPS-owned properties, including buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, adjacent to Lake McDonald. The proposed alternative uses an adaptive approach that identifies a sequence of management options for each property, which for most properties begins with historic leasing, park or concessioner use, or stabilization of properties. The last option in the adaptive management approach would be removal of buildings. The management plan has garnered local media and public interest with little to no controversy and a lot of interest in leasing the properties.
- TBD: National NPS Release: NPS announcement of annual Rutgers report on NPS Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program economic impact. Tax credits 2016 contributed \$12.3 billion in output to the U.S. economy, added \$6.2 billion in GDP. Historic preservation tax incentives encourage investments in historic preservation and revitalization of communities small and large across the country.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

- July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will announce it has apportioned \$50 million to state fish and wildlife agencies for developing and implementing programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats. The funding is provided through the FWS's State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program and is distributed through an apportionment formula in accordance with the Appropriations Act.
- July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a final rule establishing the 2017-18 hunting seasons and bag limits for certain migratory game birds to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.
- July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to establish annual hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds for the 2018-19 hunting season to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.
- July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to approve the shot for hunting waterfowl and coots. FWS has concluded that this type of shot left in the terrestrial or aquatic environments is unlikely to adversely affect fish, wildlife, or their habitats. Approving this shot formulation would increase the nontoxic shot options for hunters. Interested stakeholders include the Flyway Councils, state wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations and hunters.
- TBD: FWS Local Release: FWS plans to announce the notice of availability of the revised draft recovery plan for the giant garter snake in California. There may be some controversy with cost estimates associated with this plan.

#### Bureau of Land Management

- July 24: BLM-AZ will meet with young leaders from 19 African countries who are part of the State Department's Mandela Fellowship to discuss public land issues and challenges.
- Week of July 24: Local BLM Release: BLM-CO Little Snake Field Office will announce a 30-day public scoping period for an environmental assessment evaluating a coal Lease by Application (LBA) from Peabody Energy's Twentymile Coal Foidel Creek Mine near Hayden. The LBA is for 640 acres of federal coal underneath private surface. The coal would be mined by underground methods with no surface disturbance. The mine estimates it could recover 4.1 million tons of coal, generating approximately \$13 million in royalties, half of which would go to the state. The lease would help the mine continue to employ 365 people.
- July 25: Local BLM Release: BLM-Eastern States, in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service, will hold public meetings in St. Paul, MN, and Virginia, MN, to solicit comments regarding the proposed 20-year withdrawal of 234,328 acres of Federal minerals from national forest system lands on the Superior National Forest within the Rainy River Watershed. Public comments received during project scoping will inform development of an EIS to study the proposed mineral withdrawal.
- July 21 -26: The sage-grouse task force team comprised of BLM, USGS, USFWS, USFS, and Western Governors' offices will work in four subgroups to review a draft plan in response to S.O. 3353. The subgroups pertain to plan and policy review, fire and invasive species, data

and science and wildlife management.

- July 25 – 26: Local BLM Release: BLM-WY Pinedale and Rock Springs field offices will hold two open houses to discuss the Normally Pressured Lance Natural Gas Development Project with local communities. Public comments will be collected on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement released last week.
- July 26: BLM acting Deputy Director for Operations John Ruhs will attend the Nevada Sheriffs' Association meeting and provide a "BLM 101" presentation.
- July 26: BLM-AK will participate in the annual Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) forum, focusing on issues that relate to potential sites within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and contaminated lands and mine sites in Alaska.
- July 26: BLM-CA Bishop Field Office will meet with representatives from Mono County, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and a private landowner to discuss riparian habitat improvement for bi-state sage-grouse through alterations in county road maintenance and installation of culverts and drainage dips.

#### Bureau of Reclamation

- July 24-25: Reclamation will meet with stakeholders in Klamath Falls, Oregon, to kick off the stakeholder engagement process on the reinitiated ESA consultation on Klamath Project Operations. Organizations expected to attend the meeting include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Yurok Tribe, Karuk Tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, The Klamath Tribes, Klamath Water Users Association, and PacifiCorps.

#### Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- July 26 (tent.): BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Notice to Stakeholders on the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Cape Wind Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Note to Stakeholders on Information Transfer Meeting to be held in New Orleans August 22-24.

#### Office of Insular Affairs

- July 25: Hearing before the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, regarding the LBJ Hospital in American Samoa.
- July 25 or 26: Local IA Release: Marshall Islands grants release announces Compact Infrastructure \$149,436; Ebeye Special Needs \$300,000; Health Care Program for four Atolls (Sec 177) \$697,387.

#### **CONGRESSIONAL**

Tuesday, July 25, 2017

10:00am: House Natural Resources Indian, Insular, and Alaska Natives Affairs Subcommittee Oversight Hearing Assessing Current Conditions and Challenges at the Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center in American Samoa

Witness: Thomas Bussanich, Director of Budget, Insular Affairs

Wednesday, July 26, 2017



9:45am: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee

Legislative Hearing on S. 32, California Desert Protection and Recreation Act; S. 90, Red River Gradient Boundary Survey Act; S.357, Santa Ana River Wash Plan Land Exchange Act; S.436, San Juan County Settlement Implementation Act; S.467, Mohave County Federal Land Management Act; S.468, Historic Routes Preservation Act; S.614, Recreation and Public Purposes Act Commercial Recreation Concessions Pilot Program Act; S.785, Alaska Native Veterans Land Allotment Equity Act; S.837, Southern Utah Open OHV Areas Act; S.884, Small Miners Waiver Act; S.941, Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act; S.1149, To amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to repeal a provision limiting the export of timber harvested from land conveyed to the Kake Tribal Corporation; S.1230, Water Rights Protection Act; S.1271, Fowler and Boskoff Peaks Designation Act; and S.1548, Oregon Wildlands Act

Witness: John Ruhs, Acting Deputy Director for Operations, BLM

2:30pm: Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

Oversight Hearing on the GAO Reports on Human Trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States

Witness: Jason Thompson, Acting Director, Office of Justice Services, BIA

#### **Political Appointee Update**

Two new appointees started today bringing DOI politicals on board = 52

*Richard "Rick" Goeken-* (pronounced "Gaykin") as Deputy Solicitor for Parks and Wildlife. Past experience: Smith Currie & Hancock LLP- Partner- (focusing on impact of federal environmental law and policy on access to public lands, federal contracts for the use of natural resources and development of private property.

*Blake Deeley* as Advisor for the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs. Past experience:

Congressman David McKinley- Policy Advisor for Energy and Environmental, Subcommittees and staffer for House Congressional Coal Caucus.

5 nominated awaiting confirmation.

Deputy Secretary nominee David Bernhardt is expected to be voted on in the Senate on Monday.

Nominees Combs, Berman, and Domenech participated in a Senate hearing on Thursday.

Nominee Joe Balash to serve as the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management has been announced.

#### **Speaking Invitations**

##### **Accepted**

7/24 National Boy Scout Jamboree (Glen Jean, WV)

7/29 National Monument Review Tour Nevada and New Mexico

8/5-20 Personal

##### **Outstanding Invitations in Process**

8/22 - 2017 Lake Tahoe Summit invited by Sen. Feinstein and Sen. Heller (Lake Tahoe, CA)  
 8/25-26 - Steamboat Institute's 9th Annual Freedom Conference & Festival (Steamboat Springs, CO)  
 8/30 - West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (White Sulphur Springs, WV)

#### Declining

7/31-8/2 - FBI National Academy Associates Annual Training Conference (DC)  
 8/2 - American Legion Northwest Regional Baseball Tournament's Opening Ceremony General Welcome (Missoula, MT)  
 8/5 - Glacier National Park Conservancy remarks at Annual Backpacker's Ball (Whitefish/Kalispell)  
 8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)  
 8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)  
 8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)

#### Emergency Management

In California, the Detwiler Fire, located in Mariposa County (CAL FIRE), has burned 76,250 (+5,662) acres and is 45 (+35)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 5,043 (+1,306) personnel, including 113 (+45) DOI personnel. There are 1,500 (no change) residential structures threatened and 4,968 (no change) evacuees. State Routes 140 and 49 remain impacted by the fire and are impeding access to Yosemite National Park. Additionally, high power transmission lines, which supply power to Yosemite National Park, have been impacted by the fire. The USGS reports that the Detwiler Fire has also disrupted service for 19 seismic sensors in the Northern California Seismic Network. These sensors provide coverage over the western side of the southern San Joaquin Valley, from the San Luis Reservoir to Coalinga and from Copperopolis to Visalia in the Sierra foothills. Once access to the area is possible, a detailed assessment of impacts and projected timeline for service repairs will be performed by USGS and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) personnel. Impacts to the earthquake monitoring capabilities of the USGS include the loss of ability to detect and locate small earthquakes in the immediate vicinity, along with increased uncertainty in the initial location of larger earthquakes in the immediate vicinity. Full containment of the Detwiler Fire is expected on August 5.

In Montana, the Lodgepole Complex Fire, located in Garfield County (BLM), has burned 226,000 acres and is 5-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 IMT with 215 personnel, including 26 DOI personnel. There are 145 residential structures threatened and 50 evacuees. Twelve residences have been destroyed and the fire is threatening Sage Grouse habitat. Three civilian and two responder injuries have been reported. Full containment is expected on August 2.

USGS crews continue to support flood response operations in northern Illinois and northeastern Iowa due to heavy rains that fell on July 21 and July 22. USGS crews deployed over the weekend and made 15 discharge measurements to validate stage-discharge relations, ensure proper streamgage operation, and assist the National Weather Service (NWS) with forecast information. Overall, 22 USGS streamgages in northern Illinois are above the NWS

flood stage and six USGS streamgages in Iowa are above the NWS flood stage. All streamgages in the affected areas appear to be functioning properly, and the USGS continues to coordinate and share information with the NWS, USACE, and other local emergency managers.

### **Outside Media of Interest**

#### **U.S. National Monument in Colorado to Remain Intact.**

Reuters (7/21, Coffman) reports Secretary Zinke on Friday said that Colorado's Canyons of the Ancients National Monument "is no longer on a list of more than two dozen national monuments under review by the Trump administration for possible reduction or elimination." He has recommended that it be kept "intact, with no modifications." The story also appears at the New York Times (7/21, Reuters), U.S. News & World Report (7/21, Coffman).

#### **\$53M To Go To US National Park Maintenance, Infrastructure.**

The AP (7/22) reports on Saturday, Secretary Zinke "announced more than \$50 million for maintenance and infrastructure work at national parks." He spoke at Rocky Mountain National Park, accompanied by US Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO). According to the department \$20 million will come from Congress and \$33 million from "outside organizations."

#### **Zinke In Denver Makes A Case For Energy Production On Public Lands.**

The Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette (7/22, Bunch) reports Secretary Zinke, speaking to the Western Conservative Summit on Friday in Denver, said that the US "should open up its public lands and shores for more energy production." He said, "I can tell ya, the war on American energy is over." One reason he gave is that US "national parks are about \$11.5 billion behind in maintenance and repairs, and public lands and wildlife refuges are about \$15 billion in need."

#### **Climate Scientist Files Complaint On Trump Administration.**

The AP (7/21) reported that Joel Clement, who until recently was director of the Department of Interior's Office of Policy Analysis, "says he was mistreated by officials in the administration of President Donald Trump for speaking about climate change." Clement was reassigned to a position in which he had no background, which he claims is a violation of his federal whistleblower protections. The story also appears at San Francisco (CA) Chronicle (7/21), U.S. News & World Report (7/21), Greeneville (TN) Sun (7/21, Fitzgerald), Washington (DC) Times (7/21), and KTOO-FM Juneau (AK) Juneau, AK (7/23, Rott).

#### **Two Good Picks.**

The Ketchikan (AK) Daily News (7/21, Picks) in an editorial praises the selection of Chris Oliver to be assistant administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and "Joe Balash as the U.S. Department of Interior's assistant secretary for land and mineral management." Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in announcing the nomination said, "It's been a long time" since an assistant secretary in the Interior Department was from Alaska. The paper concludes, "it will be good to have people who already know Alaska in these positions."

#### **Amarillo-area Helium Auction Brings In \$60M.**

The Amarillo (TX) Globe News (7/23) reports, "The Bureau of Land Management sold nearly \$60 million in helium," in its "fourth annual Amarillo-area auction."

**Federal Register Listings**

Items cleared for the FR on Friday.

REG0007198 BIA Agency Information Collection Activities; Native American Business Development Institute (NABDI) Funding Solicitations and Reporting. This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, announces that BIA will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of the collection of information for the Native American Business Development Institute (NABDI) Funding Solicitation and Reporting. BIA is requesting public comments on the renewal for 60 days. Notice 07/21/2017.

REG0007184 BLM Alaska Native Claims Selection. The BLM provides notice that it will issue an appealable decision approving conveyance of the surface estate in certain lands to the Alaska Native village corporation of Tulkisarmute Incorporated, pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, as amended (ANCSA). As provided by ANCSA, the BLM simultaneously will convey the subsurface estate in the same lands to Calista Corporation. Notice 07/21/2017.

REG0007189 BLM Rescission of a 2015 Rule: Oil and Gas; Hydraulic Fracturing on Federal and Indian Lands. The BLM is proposing to rescind a 2015 final rule, "Oil and Gas; Hydraulic Fracturing on Federal and Indian Lands," because the BLM has concluded that it is unnecessarily duplicative of State and some tribal regulations and that it imposes burdensome reporting requirements and other unjustified costs on the oil and gas industry. The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) has concluded E.O. 12866 review and the BLM seeks DOI approval to publish the proposed rule ahead of a July 27, 2017, oral argument on the 2015 rule in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Proposed Rule 07/21/2017.

REG0007201 BOE Final Supplemental EIS for the Cape Wind Energy Project. BOEM announces the availability of a Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Cape Wind Energy Project, which is located in Federal waters between Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket Island. BOEM must issue the Final SEIS and publish this Notice as soon as possible to comply with a court order. Notice 07/21/2017.

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Doug Domenech  
Senior Advisor  
US Department of the Interior

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

**To:** Scott Hommel[scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov]; Magallanes, Downey[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]; Laura Rigas[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; James Cason[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]; Micah Chambers[micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov]; Daniel Jorjani[daniel\_jorjani@ios.doi.gov]; Mashburn, Lori[lori\_mashburn@ios.doi.gov]; Bauserman, Christine[christine\_bauserman@ios.doi.gov]; Caroline Boulton[caroline\_boulton@ios.doi.gov]; Thiele, Aaron[aaron\_thiele@ios.doi.gov]; Willens, Todd[todd\_willens@ios.doi.gov]; Getto, Leila[leila\_getto@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Domenech, Douglas  
**Sent:** 2017-07-24T15:41:11-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Interior Cabinet Affairs Report for 7/24/17  
**Received:** 2017-07-24T15:41:39-04:00  
[DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 7-24-17.docx](#)

Attached and copied below.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 7/24/17**

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor  
Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

**Status of the Secretary**

TODAY: The Secretary is in Washington and will travel to WV with POTUS.

Meeting with DJ Gribbin at EEOB.

Lunch with Ambassadorial nominee to Portugal George Glass.

Meeting with Louisiana Delegation (Rep. Graves, Rep. Higgins, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Abraham).

Travel to West Virginia for Boy Scouts event with POTUS.

**THIS WEEK:**

Tuesday: HOLD: Rural Prosperity Task Force Principals Breakfast; Meeting with Philip Howard, Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling; Call with Rep. Costa; Call with Senator Schatz; Travel to Ohio, American Heroes POTUS event.

Wednesday: Hold for Sen. Merkley; Tour with Mayor Bowser; Meeting with Rep. Aderholt and James Swanson; Travel to El Paso, TX. (political event)

Thursday: Las Cruces, NM Monuments Tour

Friday: Las Cruces, NM; Monuments Tour

Saturday: Santa Fe, NM / Sabinoso Wilderness

NOTE: the Secretary will be on personal leave August 5-19 out of the country.

**Media TODAY**

**(Saturday) SECRETARY ZINKE AND COLORADO SENATOR GARDNER ANNOUNCE MORE THAN \$50 MILLION FOR NATIONAL PARKS INFRASTRUCTURE**

**NPS Centennial Challenge Program is Matching \$20 Million in Congressional Funding with \$33 Million from Partner Organizations to Support Maintenance Projects at National Parks**

**WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Colorado Senator Cory Gardner announced today that the National Park Service is teaming up with partners across the nation to distribute nearly \$50 million in high priority maintenance and infrastructure projects at 42 parks in**

**29 states. Congress provided \$20 million for the projects as part of the Centennial Challenge program which will be matched by \$33 million from more than 50 park partners to improve trails, restore buildings, and increase visitor access to parks.**

**Secretary Zinke and Senator Gardner made the announcement while visiting Rocky Mountain National Park, which will receive \$200,000 in federal funds matched by \$200,000 from the Rocky Mountain Conservancy to reduce deferred maintenance on the Alluvial Fan Trail.**

**(Potential) Zinke on confirmation of Bernhardt.**

### **DOI COMMS REPORT**

Secretarial-level Announcements/Events/Interviews

- Next Monday the Secretary will join POTUS in WV at the Boy Scout Jamboree and then a potential D.C. mayor tour. Tuesday: Ohio POTUS event. Wednesday he will start his monument tour of New Mexico and then Nevada.

### **National Park Service**

- July 24: Local NPS Release: Denali National Park will issue an environmental assessment on Milepost 231 Wayside and Trail Connections. This project for parking, trailheads, and a new trail connection is the NPS portion of a partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the Federal Highways Administration to enhance safety for pedestrians and other non-motorists in the area in conjunction with a bridge replacement over the Nenana River.
- Week of July 24: Local NPS Release: The Reconstruction Era National Monument will hold three public listening sessions (not related to July 28 Reconstruction Era Theme Study) in Beaufort, Port Royal, and St. Helena Island, South Carolina, as part of the development of a foundation document for this new park. Targeted stakeholder meetings will also be held in the respective communities during the day to identify the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the National Park Service in setting up these new areas and also provide input into the development of the foundation document and interpretive themes.
- July 25: Local NPS Release: The National Park Service will announce a 30-day public comment period on the Glacier National Park Lake McDonald Properties Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA). Following the public review and comment period, the park will prepare a formal decision document. The EA analyzes alternatives to manage NPS-owned properties, including buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, adjacent to Lake McDonald. The proposed alternative uses an adaptive approach that identifies a sequence of management options for each property, which for most properties begins with historic leasing, park or concessioner use, or stabilization of properties. The last option in the adaptive management approach would be removal of buildings. The management plan has garnered local media and public interest with little to no controversy and a lot of interest in leasing the properties.
- TBD: National NPS Release: NPS announcement of annual Rutgers report on NPS Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program economic impact. Tax credits 2016 contributed \$12.3 billion in output to the U.S. economy, added \$6.2 billion in GDP. Historic preservation tax incentives encourage investments in historic preservation and revitalization of

communities small and large across the country.

#### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will announce it has apportioned \$50 million to state fish and wildlife agencies for developing and implementing programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats. The funding is provided through the FWS's State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program and is distributed through an apportionment formula in accordance with the Appropriations Act.
- July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a final rule establishing the 2017-18 hunting seasons and bag limits for certain migratory game birds to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.
- July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to establish annual hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds for the 2018-19 hunting season to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.
- July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to approve the shot for hunting waterfowl and coots. FWS has concluded that this type of shot left in the terrestrial or aquatic environments is unlikely to adversely affect fish, wildlife, or their habitats. Approving this shot formulation would increase the nontoxic shot options for hunters. Interested stakeholders include the Flyway Councils, state wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations and hunters.
- TBD: FWS Local Release: FWS plans to announce the notice of availability of the revised draft recovery plan for the giant garter snake in California. There may be some controversy with cost estimates associated with this plan.

#### Bureau of Land Management

- July 24: BLM-AZ will meet with young leaders from 19 African countries who are part of the State Department's Mandela Fellowship to discuss public land issues and challenges.
- Week of July 24: Local BLM Release: BLM-CO Little Snake Field Office will announce a 30-day public scoping period for an environmental assessment evaluating a coal Lease by Application (LBA) from Peabody Energy's Twentymile Coal Foidel Creek Mine near Hayden. The LBA is for 640 acres of federal coal underneath private surface. The coal would be mined by underground methods with no surface disturbance. The mine estimates it could recover 4.1 million tons of coal, generating approximately \$13 million in royalties, half of which would go to the state. The lease would help the mine continue to employ 365 people.
- July 25: Local BLM Release: BLM-Eastern States, in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service, will hold public meetings in St. Paul, MN, and Virginia, MN, to solicit comments regarding the proposed 20-year withdrawal of 234,328 acres of Federal minerals from national forest system lands on the Superior National Forest within the Rainy River Watershed. Public comments received during project scoping will inform development of an EIS to study the proposed mineral withdrawal.



- July 21 -26: The sage-grouse task force team comprised of BLM, USGS, USFWS, USFS, and Western Governors' offices will work in four subgroups to review a draft plan in response to S.O. 3353. The subgroups pertain to plan and policy review, fire and invasive species, data and science and wildlife management.
- July 25 – 26: Local BLM Release: BLM-WY Pinedale and Rock Springs field offices will hold two open houses to discuss the Normally Pressured Lance Natural Gas Development Project with local communities. Public comments will be collected on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement released last week.
- July 26: BLM acting Deputy Director for Operations John Ruhs will attend the Nevada Sheriffs' Association meeting and provide a "BLM 101" presentation.
- July 26: BLM-AK will participate in the annual Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) forum, focusing on issues that relate to potential sites within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and contaminated lands and mine sites in Alaska.
- July 26: BLM-CA Bishop Field Office will meet with representatives from Mono County, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and a private landowner to discuss riparian habitat improvement for bi-state sage-grouse through alterations in county road maintenance and installation of culverts and drainage dips.

#### Bureau of Reclamation

- July 24-25: Reclamation will meet with stakeholders in Klamath Falls, Oregon, to kick off the stakeholder engagement process on the reinitiated ESA consultation on Klamath Project Operations. Organizations expected to attend the meeting include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Yurok Tribe, Karuk Tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, The Klamath Tribes, Klamath Water Users Association, and PacifiCorps.

#### Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- July 26 (tent.): BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Notice to Stakeholders on the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Cape Wind Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Note to Stakeholders on Information Transfer Meeting to be held in New Orleans August 22-24.

#### Office of Insular Affairs

- July 25: Hearing before the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, regarding the LBJ Hospital in American Samoa.
- July 25 or 26: Local IA Release: Marshall Islands grants release announces Compact Infrastructure \$149,436; Ebeye Special Needs \$300,000; Health Care Program for four Atolls (Sec 177) \$697,387.

#### CONGRESSIONAL

Tuesday, July 25, 2017

10:00am: House Natural Resources Indian, Insular, and Alaska Natives Affairs Subcommittee Oversight Hearing Assessing Current Conditions and Challenges at the Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center in American Samoa

Witness: Thomas Bussanich, Director of Budget, Insular Affairs

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

9:45am: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee

Legislative Hearing on S. 32, California Desert Protection and Recreation Act; S. 90, Red River Gradient Boundary Survey Act; S.357, Santa Ana River Wash Plan Land Exchange Act; S.436, San Juan County Settlement Implementation Act; S.467, Mohave County Federal Land Management Act; S.468, Historic Routes Preservation Act; S.614, Recreation and Public Purposes Act Commercial Recreation Concessions Pilot Program Act; S.785, Alaska Native Veterans Land Allotment Equity Act; S.837, Southern Utah Open OHV Areas Act; S.884, Small Miners Waiver Act; S.941, Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act; S.1149, To amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to repeal a provision limiting the export of timber harvested from land conveyed to the Kake Tribal Corporation; S.1230, Water Rights Protection Act; S.1271, Fowler and Boskoff Peaks Designation Act; and S.1548, Oregon Wildlands Act

Witness: John Ruhs, Acting Deputy Director for Operations, BLM

2:30pm: Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

Oversight Hearing on the GAO Reports on Human Trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States

Witness: Jason Thompson, Acting Director, Office of Justice Services, BIA

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### **Political Appointee Update**

Two new appointees started today bringing DOI politicals on board = 52

*Richard "Rick" Goeken-* (pronounced "Gaykin") as Deputy Solicitor for Parks and Wildlife. Past experience: Smith Currie & Hancock LLP- Partner- (focusing on impact of federal environmental law and policy on access to public lands, federal contracts for the use of natural resources and development of private property.

*Blake Deeley* as Advisor for the Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs. Past experience:

Congressman David McKinley- Policy Advisor for Energy and Environmental, Subcommittees and staffer for House Congressional Coal Caucus.

5 nominated awaiting confirmation.

Deputy Secretary nominee David Bernhardt is expected to be voted on in the Senate on Monday.

Nominees Combs, Berman, and Domenech participated in a Senate hearing on Thursday.

Nominee Joe Balash to serve as the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management has been announced.

### **Speaking Invitations**

#### **Accepted**

7/24 National Boy Scout Jamboree (Glen Jean, WV)

7/29 National Monument Review Tour Nevada and New Mexico

8/5-20 Personal

Outstanding Invitations in Process

8/22 - 2017 Lake Tahoe Summit invited by Sen. Feinstein and Sen. Heller (Lake Tahoe, CA)

8/25-26 - Steamboat Institute's 9th Annual Freedom Conference & Festival (Steamboat Springs, CO)

8/30 - West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (White Sulphur Springs, WV)

Declining

7/31-8/2 - FBI National Academy Associates Annual Training Conference (DC)

8/2 - American Legion Northwest Regional Baseball Tournament's Opening Ceremony General Welcome (Missoula, MT)

8/5 - Glacier National Park Conservancy remarks at Annual Backpacker's Ball (Whitefish/KalisPELL)

8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)

8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)

8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)

Emergency Management

In California, the Detwiler Fire, located in Mariposa County (CAL FIRE), has burned 76,250 (+5,662) acres and is 45 (+35)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 5,043 (+1,306) personnel, including 113 (+45) DOI personnel. There are 1,500 (no change) residential structures threatened and 4,968 (no change) evacuees. State Routes 140 and 49 remain impacted by the fire and are impeding access to Yosemite National Park. Additionally, high power transmission lines, which supply power to Yosemite National Park, have been impacted by the fire. The USGS reports that the Detwiler Fire has also disrupted service for 19 seismic sensors in the Northern California Seismic Network. These sensors provide coverage over the western side of the southern San Joaquin Valley, from the San Luis Reservoir to Coalinga and from Copperopolis to Visalia in the Sierra foothills. Once access to the area is possible, a detailed assessment of impacts and projected timeline for service repairs will be performed by USGS and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) personnel. Impacts to the earthquake monitoring capabilities of the USGS include the loss of ability to detect and locate small earthquakes in the immediate vicinity, along with increased uncertainty in the initial location of larger earthquakes in the immediate vicinity. Full containment of the Detwiler Fire is expected on August 5.

In Montana, the Lodgepole Complex Fire, located in Garfield County (BLM), has burned 226,000 acres and is 5-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 IMT with 215 personnel, including 26 DOI personnel. There are 145 residential structures threatened and 50 evacuees. Twelve residences have been destroyed and the fire is threatening Sage Grouse habitat. Three civilian and two responder injuries have been reported. Full containment is expected on August 2.

USGS crews continue to support flood response operations in northern Illinois and northeastern Iowa due to heavy rains that fell on July 21 and July 22. USGS crews deployed

over the weekend and made 15 discharge measurements to validate stage-discharge relations, ensure proper streamgauge operation, and assist the National Weather Service (NWS) with forecast information. Overall, 22 USGS streamgages in northern Illinois are above the NWS flood stage and six USGS streamgages in Iowa are above the NWS flood stage. All streamgages in the affected areas appear to be functioning properly, and the USGS continues to coordinate and share information with the NWS, USACE, and other local emergency managers.

### **Outside Media of Interest**

#### **U.S. National Monument in Colorado to Remain Intact.**

Reuters (7/21, Coffman) reports Secretary Zinke on Friday said that Colorado's Canyons of the Ancients National Monument "is no longer on a list of more than two dozen national monuments under review by the Trump administration for possible reduction or elimination." He has recommended that it be kept "intact, with no modifications." The story also appears at the New York Times (7/21, Reuters), U.S. News & World Report (7/21, Coffman).

#### **\$53M To Go To US National Park Maintenance, Infrastructure.**

The AP (7/22) reports on Saturday, Secretary Zinke "announced more than \$50 million for maintenance and infrastructure work at national parks." He spoke at Rocky Mountain National Park, accompanied by US Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO). According to the department \$20 million will come from Congress and \$33 million from "outside organizations."

#### **Zinke In Denver Makes A Case For Energy Production On Public Lands.**

The Colorado Springs (CO) Gazette (7/22, Bunch) reports Secretary Zinke, speaking to the Western Conservative Summit on Friday in Denver, said that the US "should open up its public lands and shores for more energy production." He said, "I can tell ya, the war on American energy is over." One reason he gave is that US "national parks are about \$11.5 billion behind in maintenance and repairs, and public lands and wildlife refuges are about \$15 billion in need."

#### **Climate Scientist Files Complaint On Trump Administration.**

The AP (7/21) reported that Joel Clement, who until recently was director of the Department of Interior's Office of Policy Analysis, "says he was mistreated by officials in the administration of President Donald Trump for speaking about climate change." Clement was reassigned to a position in which he had no background, which he claims is a violation of his federal whistleblower protections. The story also appears at San Francisco (CA) Chronicle (7/21), U.S. News & World Report (7/21), Greeneville (TN) Sun (7/21, Fitzgerald), Washington (DC) Times (7/21), and KTOO-FM Juneau (AK) Juneau, AK (7/23, Rott).

#### **Two Good Picks.**

The Ketchikan (AK) Daily News (7/21, Picks) in an editorial praises the selection of Chris Oliver to be assistant administrator of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and "Joe Balash as the U.S. Department of Interior's assistant secretary for land and mineral management." Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in announcing the nomination said, "It's been a long time" since an assistant secretary in the Interior Department was from Alaska. The paper concludes, "it will be good to have people who already know Alaska in these positions."

**Amarillo-area Helium Auction Brings In \$60M.**

The Amarillo (TX) Globe News (7/23) reports, "The Bureau of Land Management sold nearly \$60 million in helium," in its "fourth annual Amarillo-area auction."

**Federal Register Listings**

Items cleared for the FR on Friday.

REG0007198 BIA Agency Information Collection Activities; Native American Business Development Institute (NABDI) Funding Solicitations and Reporting. This Notice, under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, announces that BIA will ask the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to renew its approval of the collection of information for the Native American Business Development Institute (NABDI) Funding Solicitation and Reporting. BIA is requesting public comments on the renewal for 60 days. Notice 07/21/2017.

REG0007184 BLM Alaska Native Claims Selection. The BLM provides notice that it will issue an appealable decision approving conveyance of the surface estate in certain lands to the Alaska Native village corporation of Tulkisarmute Incorporated, pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, as amended (ANCSA). As provided by ANCSA, the BLM simultaneously will convey the subsurface estate in the same lands to Calista Corporation. Notice 07/21/2017.

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**To:** heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro Energy  
**Sent:** 2017-07-25T05:42:11-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Morning Energy, presented by Chevron: White House coy ahead of House Russia sanctions vote — House GOP mulls another try at full omnibus — Bernhardt confirmed by Senate  
**Received:** 2017-07-25T05:42:19-04:00

By Anthony Adragna | 07/25/2017 05:40 AM EDT

*With help from Esther Whieldon and Darius Dixon*

**RUSSIAN SANCTIONS GETS HOUSE VOTE TODAY:** House lawmakers vote today on a package of sanctions against Russia, Iran and North Korea, but it remains an open question what President Donald Trump would do once the measure reaches his desk. White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders on Monday appeared to walk back earlier indications of support. "He's looking over where it stands exactly at this point and we'll keep you posted on the decision," she told reporters on traveling with the president on Air Force One. The bill, H.R. 3364, includes language sought by the U.S. energy sector that would allow companies to participate in projects as long as sanctioned Russian firms do not have a controlling interest or more than a 33 percent stake in them. It is expected to easily clear the House.

**Speaking of sanctions,** any new penalties currently being considered against Venezuela won't start with the country's oil exports, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports, citing a senior administration official. "Everything is definitely on the table" as far as sanctions targets, the official told Ben. But "round one will definitely not" target the country's oil sector, the official added. Analysts have said that targeting Venezuela's oil sector would crash its economy and make the human rights situation there worse. U.S. refiners have also scoffed at the idea.

**SUMMER BREAK DELAYED?** Frustrated with their leadership's decision to pursue a slimmed-down, mini-spending package this week, House GOP Appropriators are urging the cancellation of the first week of August recess so they can pursue a full, 12-bill omnibus, POLITICO's Rachael Bade and John Bresnahan report. "The whole purpose of whipping is to be able to make your case so the fact that we did all this work and it's not going anywhere is really frustrating," steamed appropriator Tom Rooney said last Thursday. Sources close to GOP leaders said Monday they were considering reversing course and pursuing the broader spending package. But by Monday night it appeared they still sorely lacked the votes.

**In the meantime,** the House Rules Committee is expected to finalize the structure of the debate for the mini-bus later today. Lawmakers filed 79 amendments to the Energy and Water title of the package H.R. 3219 (115) on everything from funding for Yucca mountain to increasing funds for DOE's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy to barring a rider related to the Waters of the U.S. regulation. Many of those are unlikely to actually see floor time, but we'll have to wait until the committee finishes up its work to see the full list of what made the cut.

**In a statement of administration policy** Monday, the White House backed the underlying spending bill but strongly condemned "continued construction" for the MOX project in South

Carolina, which the administration called "unaffordable and risky." In addition, the White House voiced concern with a prohibition on using other funds from the Nuclear Waste Fund on interim nuclear waste storage activities and called for lawmakers to "further reduce funding for costly later-stage development, commercialization, and deployment activities" on energy research.

**WELCOME TO TUESDAY!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and Sen. Orrin Hatch is the proud booster of the sole Reagan Republican primary endorsement. For today: Who was the first senator in history to be reelected after switching parties? Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy), and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**Playbook Exchange Denver** — Join POLITICO Playbook co-authors Anna Palmer and Jake Sherman for a special Playbook Exchange event in Denver with Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper. Aug. 1 — 5:30 p.m. MDT / 7:30 p.m. EDT — S&P Global, 1800 Larimer St., 2nd Floor, Denver. RSVP: [Here](#). Watch it live: [Here](#).

**BERNHARDT WINS SENATE CONFIRMATION:** Senators voted 53-43 Monday evening to confirm David Bernhardt's nomination as deputy secretary at Interior, Pro's Ben Lefebvre reports. Five members of the Democratic caucus — [Michael Bennet](#), [Joe Donnelly](#), [Heidi Heitkamp](#), [Angus King](#) and [Joe Manchin](#) — joined all Republicans in supporting his bid to serve as Secretary Ryan Zinke's No. 2. "David's extensive experience serving under previous Interior secretaries, his esteemed legal career, and down-right love of our land and resources is exactly what is needed to help streamline government," Zinke said in a statement after the vote.

**Green and good governance groups**, which criticized Bernhardt as having too many conflicts of interest to fill the position, vowed after the vote they would closely watch his actions at the agency. "Bernhardt is ethically compromised on issues ranging from national monuments to offshore drilling; we expect timely recusals from these decision-making processes," Kelly Mitchell, Greenpeace's climate and energy director, said in a statement.

**SPOTTED:** Energy Secretary Rick Perry and fellow Eagle Scout Zinke (in a Scout uniform) traveled with Trump to the 2017 National Scout Jamboree in Beaver, W.Va., and stood behind the president on stage as he delivered remarks. Picture of the two Cabinet secretaries [here](#). Trump tweeted [video](#) of them boarding Air Force One as well.

**DEEP DIVE INTO USDA SCIENCE PICK:** All major farm groups are lining up behind Sam Clovis, Trump's pick to be USDA's chief scientist who lacks scientific experience and has criticized mainstream climate change science, Pro Agriculture's Helena Bottemiller Evich reports. "Some have suggested that Dr. Clovis is not qualified for this position due to his lack of hands-on science and research experience," a coalition of nearly two dozen industry groups wrote. "We do not share this point of view." But environmental and scientific groups say he's not qualified for a position that, by law, must be drawn from "among distinguished scientists with specialized training or significant experience in agricultural research, education and economics." Despite criticism of his credentials, Clovis has been quietly winning over rank-and-file at USDA, which was not seized by the chaos that engulfed other agencies, like EPA, during the first few months of the Trump administration.



**DEMS READY TO ROLL ON ENERGY BILL?** Whatever shot the Senate's energy package [S. 1460 \(115\)](#) has for movement in the near term likely hinges on today's healthcare vote, but Energy and Natural Resources ranking member [Maria Cantwell](#) says her side is good to go. "We hotlined it on our side and everybody's ready to go," she told reporters. Should the healthcare vote fail, the measure's backers hope it could be slotted in for floor time as the chamber plans to stick around into August. But a Democratic committee aide was less equivocal about where things stand later Monday: "We're still working through the amendment process right now," the aide said.

**CARPER BASHES PRUITT:** Amid [disclosures showing](#) EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt spent nearly half his first three months atop the agency on trips to Oklahoma, Senate EPW ranking member [Tom Carper](#) called for "increased transparency" from the administrator but delivered quite the burn. "Mr. Pruitt has spent more days in Oklahoma at this point than President Trump has spent at his golf courses, which is no minor feat," he said in a statement.

**PROBE SOUGHT OVER INTERIOR REASSIGNMENTS:** Eight Senate ENR Democrats, led by ranking member [Maria Cantwell](#), asked Interior's inspector general to look into recent moves to reassign senior career staff, Pro's Esther Whieldon [reports](#). The move follows the highly publicized transfer of Joel Clement, who was moved from a managerial position involving climate change issues to a job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies. In [a letter](#) to Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall, the senators said moving career staff to jobs "where their talents are wasted would constitute a serious act of mismanagement, a gross waste of public funds, and an abuse of authority."

**\*\* A message from Chevron:** We're piloting a program that uses drones to keep an eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines—all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://bit.ly/2vnI0Ve> \*\*

**FIRST STEP TOWARD CLIMATE 'RED TEAM'?** The Competitive Enterprise Institute's Myron Ebell says EPA might tap Steven Koonin, DOE undersecretary for science from 2009 to 2011, to run its "red team" review of climate science, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#). Koonin, who wrote in 2014 the science behind climate change "[is not settled](#)," floated the formation of a red team in an April Wall Street Journal [piece](#), where he said such a review "would shine much-needed light on the scientific debates" surrounding the issue. Critics say such an exercise would give the minority disputing the scientific consensus on climate change an outsized public voice.

**WOTUS TOURS ROLLS ON:** Pruitt headed to South Carolina Monday for further discussion with local officials about the Waters of the U.S. regulation. Attendees included Sen. [Lindsey Graham](#), Rep. [Joe Wilson](#) and state Attorney General Alan Wilson. "[#WOTUS](#) fails common sense test and proven to be government overreach at its worst," Graham [tweeted](#).

**ANOTHER PANEL WADES INTO BIOFUELS DEBATE:** Two House Science subpanels dip their toes into the ongoing debate over biofuels policy with a hearing at 10 a.m. that the committee says will "examine federal funding of biofuels projects and how it affects the private market." Witnesses include representatives from Oak Ridge National Laboratory and University of Michigan's Energy Institute, as well Growth Energy's CEO Emily Skor and the Heritage Foundation's Nicolas Loris. More info [here](#).

**NUCLEAR, CCS TECHNOLOGIES EXAMINED:** The Senate EPW Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety today hears from experts on the research, development, and deployment of advanced nuclear and carbon capture, utilization, and sequestration technologies. A committee aide said the session would "inform potential future legislative proposals and review of regulatory activities." Lamar Alexander, the top Energy appropriator, testifies first. The hearing kicks off at 10 a.m. in Dirksen 406.

**HOTTEST TAKE:** House Science Chairman Lamar Smith published a piece on the Heritage Foundation's Daily Signal Monday arguing "the benefits of a changing climate are often ignored and under-researched." Read it here.

**HEITKAMP DISHES ON CCS BILL:** If you, like ME, hadn't known previously that Sen. Heidi Heitkamp has a podcast, her latest episode features Sens. Sheldon Whitehouse and Shelley Moore Capito discussing their efforts to enact legislation boosting carbon capture and sequestration technologies. "I'm a very strong believer in an all-in strategy," Whitehouse said, describing why he's pushing the bill. "We know it's not going to be what it was in the past — we know that and accept that — but we do see it as a baseload energy provider, but if we don't get it cleaner, we're going to have much rockier roads in front of us," Capito said of coal.

**LBNL REPORT SAYS STATE RPS PLAYING DIMINISHED ROLE:** A new report by DOE's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory finds that overall state renewable portfolio standards are playing less of a role in renewables growth, particularly where wind generation is concerned. Across the U.S. last year, RPS drove 44 percent of all renewable capacity additions whereas from 2008 through 2014 it accounted for up to 70 percent of new projects. In 2016, only 21 percent of all wind additions were because of state requirements, although 59 percent of new solar was thanks to state RPS. The report attributes the changes partly to corporate contracts for renewable power and growth of utility-scale projects in states that do not have renewable standards.

**REPORT: NEW REACTORS COULD MAKE INDUSTRY COMPETITIVE:** Advanced reactor tech could make nuclear-generated electricity competitive in the power markets where the industry has states bending over backward to rescue the existing fleet, according to a report coming out today. The study, being released by the Energy Innovation Reform Project, estimates that the technology under development at eight companies could generate electricity at an average of \$60 per megawatt-hour, nearly 40 percent below what the Vogtle and Summer nuclear expansions will be producing at. "At these costs, nuclear would be effectively competitive with any other option for power generation," the report says. EIRP's executive director will discuss the report at the Nuclear Energy Institute headquarters at 10 a.m.

**FORUM LOOKS AT GRID INNOVATION:** The Edison Electric Institute, GridWise Alliance and National Electrical Manufacturers Association today at 9:30 a.m. kick-off an expo looking at the latest technologies and projects transforming the electric grid. Held in conjunction with the House Grid Innovation Caucus, the event takes place in the Rayburn Foyer.

**DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED FRACKING BAN SOUGHT:** Environmental groups from New Jersey, New York and other states will submit a petition with more than 60,000 signatures this week to governors and the Army Corps of Engineers asking for a permanent ban

on fracking in the Delaware River watershed area, POLITICO New York's David Giambusso [reports](#). The Delaware River Basin Commission has imposed a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing in the river's watershed area since 2010.

**MOVER, SHAKER:** Robert Scher has been appointed head of international affairs for BP America, effective immediately; he's been serving since 2014 as the assistant secretary of Defense for strategy, plans, and capabilities in the Pentagon.

## QUICK HITS

- U.K. Seeking to Fill Climate Leadership Void Left by Trump. [Bloomberg](#).
- Dakota Access protesters claim responsibility for pipeline sabotage. [Des Moines Register](#).
- Study: our Paris carbon budget may be 40% smaller than thought. [Guardian](#).
- Coal Baron Attempts to Halt Critical 'Last Week Tonight' Rebroadcast. [Rolling Stone](#).
- Fighting climate change can boost jobs, cut inequality - New York mayor [Reuters](#).
- Luxury hotels, fine dining for LePage on taxpayers' dime. [Portland Press-Herald](#).

## HAPPENING TODAY

9:30 a.m. — The Edison Electric Institute, GridWise Alliance, and National Electrical Manufacturers Association host Grid Innovation Expo, Rayburn Foyer

10:00 a.m. — "[No Regulation Without Representation](#)," House Judiciary Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform, Commercial and Antitrust Law, Rayburn 2141

10:00 a.m. — "[Examining Advancements in Biofuels: Balancing Federal Research and Market Innovation](#)," House Science Subcommittees on Energy and Environment, 2318 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — "[Efforts on Marine Debris in the Oceans and Great Lakes](#)," Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard, Russell 253

10:00 a.m. — "[Developing and Deploying Advanced Clean Energy Technologies](#)," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Dirksen 406

10:00 a.m. — "[Examining Sue and Settle Agreements: Part II](#)," House Oversight Subcommittees on Interior, Energy and Environment and Intergovernmental Affairs, 2154 Rayburn

## THAT'S ALL FOR ME!

**\*\* A message from Chevron:** This is a story about energy, safety, and some truly high-flyin' doin'. We're piloting a program that uses drones, HD imaging, and thermal mapping to help keep a close eye on Chevron wells, tanks, and pipelines—all to keep DOERS and what they're doin' safer. Watch the video: <http://bit.ly/2vnI0Ve> \*\*

*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/07/white-house-coy-ahead-of-house-russia-sanctions-vote-023899>

## **Stories from POLITICO Pro**

### **Senior U.S. official: Venezuelan oil won't be first target of potential sanctions** [Back](#)

By Ben Lefebvre | 07/24/2017 06:51 PM EDT

The U.S. would not include Venezuela's oil exports in any first round of new sanctions currently being considered, a senior administration official said today.

The White House is still weighing its options of how exactly to react to the situation in Venezuela, where President Nicolás Maduro's government has been clashing with protesters for weeks, the senior official told POLITICO. Sanctions could come before a July 30 vote whether to start the process of rewriting the country's constitution, the official added.

"Everything is definitely on the table" as far as sanctions targets, the official told POLITICO. But "round one will definitely not" target the country's oil sector, the official added.

Oil is Venezuela's main source of foreign currency, which it desperately needs to repay loans from China and Russia. Analysts have said that targeting Venezuela's oil sector would crash its economy and make the human rights situation there worse.

U.S. refiners have also criticized the idea. The U.S. is one of the main destinations for that oil, importing 796,000 barrels of crude oil a day in 2016, according to the EIA. Most of it goes to refineries along the Gulf Coast.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** A decision on sanctions could come later this week.

*To view online* [click here](#).

[Back](#)

### **Unhappy GOP appropriators press leadership to delay recess** [Back](#)

By Rachael Bade, John Bresnahan and Sarah Ferris | 07/24/2017 05:07 PM EDT

House Republican appropriators are pressing Speaker Paul Ryan to cancel the first week of recess and tackle a massive spending package full of goodies for the base — a strategy leadership rejected last week.

Under the lead of financial services subcommittee chairman Tom Graves (R-Ga.), a handful of appropriators are urging leadership to reconsider and bring up a \$1 trillion appropriations bill before leaving for summer break. They argue they worked at record pace to finish all their spending bills. And they were furious when leadership decided last week to only pursue a smaller, scaled-back version for national security priorities.

Some appropriators even threatened to vote against the so-called "minibus" of Pentagon spending plus-ups and border wall funding unless the other bills were included. Others took leaders to task for failing to sell the idea to the conference, resulting in an inconclusive whip check that showed a lack of support.

"We worked really hard on these bills," steamed appropriator Tom Rooney (R-Fla.) last Thursday. "Then it's put out for a whip check on a Friday — and nobody knows what's in these bills — but they don't give us a chance to make our case? Then they do a whip check and people are all undecided and then they pull it."

He added: "The whole purpose of whipping is to be able to make your case so the fact that we did all this work and it's not going anywhere is really frustrating."

Even Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), an ally of GOP leadership also on the appropriations panel, was not happy the bills wouldn't hit the floor.

"Look, it's a Republican bill full of Republican policies... But we didn't get a chance to make that argument and I regret that," he said.

To be sure, leaders decided against pursuing the full package of spending bills because they did not have the votes. Should the legislation fail on the floor, it would create an embarrassing episode highlighting Republicans' inability to govern — and leaving a sour taste in their mouths as they depart for the five-week recess.

That's the main reason why Ryan (R-Wis.) and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) decided not to pursue the bigger spending package in the first place. Chief deputy whip Patrick McHenry (R-N.C.) told them and lawmakers in a closed-door meeting last week that they whip came back overwhelmingly "undecided."

Sources close to GOP leaders say they're were once again re-considering a full, 12-bill omnibus instead of the minibus on Monday. By Monday evening, however, it appeared they still sorely lacked the votes.

If leadership decides to reverse course and pursue a full GOP spending package, it's likely the House will stay in session for another week, delaying the first week of recess.

The decision entirely hinges on the number of supporters Graves can muster. He, McHenry and several other whips worked the phones throughout the weekend, trying to move members from "undecided" to "yes," insiders said.

Supporters of the idea are starting to get involved as well to up the pressure game. Republican Study Chairman Mark Walker is attempting to force a vote on a GOP omnibus with a last-minute amendment to this week's slimmer package.

His amendment, which dropped late Monday night, would wrap all 12 bills into a single bundle that would hit the full floor of the House. The RSC chairman has already spoken to House GOP leaders and members of the House Rules Committee about the amendment, according to a senior GOP aide.

"In conversations with members, they're more favorable to this process," a senior GOP congressional aide said.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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### **Senate confirms Bernhardt as Interior deputy [Back](#)**

By Ben Lefebvre | 07/24/2017 06:31 PM EDT

The Senate today confirmed former lobbyist Dave Bernhardt to the Interior Department's No. 2 spot.

The 53-43 vote to make Bernhardt deputy secretary fills a key position in a department that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has complained of being severely understaffed. President Donald Trump has tasked Interior with major regulatory reviews and policy changes in a bid to increase oil and gas production.

Bernhardt had worked at Interior in several roles, including solicitor, during the George W. Bush administration.

Bernhardt's confirmation came despite environmental and good governance groups criticizing him as having too many conflicts of interest to fill the position. They also took issue with Bernhardt continuing to work for his old firm Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck LLP even after he withdrew his lobbying registration to pursue the nomination.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Bernhardt will take up his position.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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### **The Sam Clovis factor: Scientist? No. Skilled in the science of influencing Trump? Yes.**

[Back](#)

By Helena Bottemiller Evich | 07/25/2017 05:01 AM EDT

Sam Clovis, President Donald Trump's pick to be USDA's chief scientist, has been many things in life: He's an F-16 fighter pilot turned defense contractor turned academic; he was a conservative radio host in Sioux City, Iowa, and a failed U.S. Senate candidate in the Hawkeye State who managed to become co-chair of the presidential campaign of a New Yorker who won — against all odds.

These days in Washington, Clovis' critics are obsessing over what he is not: He's not an agricultural scientist, nor is he an agricultural economist, nor does he appear to be qualified for a position that, by law, must be drawn from "among distinguished scientists with specialized training or significant experience in agricultural research, education and economics."

Senate Democrats, activists deeply concerned about climate change and left-leaning science groups predictably seized on Clovis' weak credentials to attack his selection as yet another sign the Trump administration rejects science-based policymaking and endangers the integrity of federal research.

But none of that has deterred the heavyweights in the agriculture industry, who believe, in effect, that Clovis' political savvy is more important than his resume.

The White House announced last week that Trump intends to nominate Clovis, but it has not yet sent the formal paperwork to the Hill. In the coming nomination fight, Clovis, whose early and loyal backing of Trump helped the president win in Iowa, has politics on his side.

Not only does Trump owe him a job, but most major farm groups are now rallying behind his pending nomination despite his lack of hard-science experience. On Monday, a coalition of nearly two dozen industry groups, including the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Corn Growers Association, sent a letter to Senate Agriculture Committee leaders, urging support for Clovis — a political calculation that has many policy experts in Washington rolling their eyes, considering farm groups constantly fuss about the importance of sound science.

"Some have suggested that Dr. Clovis is not qualified for this position due to his lack of hands-on science and research experience," the groups wrote. "We do not share this point of view. The U.S. Department of Agriculture already employs some of the finest and most dedicated scientists in the world. They do not need a peer. They need someone to champion their work before the administration, the Congress, and all consumers around the world."

What Clovis lacks in science chops, he makes up for in knowing — really understanding — Trump. Back in April, when Trump was on the verge of withdrawing the U.S. from NAFTA, it was widely reported that Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue helped walk the president away from the ledge by showing up at an Oval Office meeting with a map of the U.S. that pointed out areas that would be most harmed by an abrupt withdrawal — many of them counties and states that voted for Trump, and many of them rural.

It was actually Clovis who prepped Perdue for the meeting and Clovis who suggested the secretary take along the map to drive home his point in a visual, high-impact way, multiple sources with knowledge of the exchange said. Clovis did not respond to multiple inquiries from POLITICO.

"It shows that I do have a very big farmer base, which is good," Trump later recalled about the meeting and the map, after deciding to drop a planned executive order that would have pulled the U.S. from the free trade deal with Mexico and Canada, which has been a boon for agriculture. "They like Trump, but I like them, and I'm going to help them."

If Clovis has special insight into what makes Trump tick, it's because he joined Trump's campaign early on and earned standing in a political universe where family has first-order status and positions of true influence are grounded in loyalty, above all else.

Clovis first bet on Rick Perry in Iowa, but bailed when the former Texas governor sputtered. The

Iowan joined the Trump campaign as co-chair and policy adviser in August 2015, two short months after Trump announced his run — back when many in Washington dismissed his candidacy as a joke.

Clovis grew to be an influential part of Trump's lean campaign team, serving as a constant surrogate on cable news and corralling an unwieldy group of unconventional policy advisers.

"He's been with Donald Trump from the very beginning," said Gary Baise, a leading agriculture lawyer in Washington, who Clovis enlisted to help organize farm leaders during the campaign. "He has a masterful understanding of how to appeal to Donald Trump for the benefit of agriculture."

### **From Sioux City to Trumpland**

Clovis, if he had his druthers, really wanted something at DoD — perhaps a more logical choice given his long career in the U.S. Air Force. But USDA undersecretary for research, education and economics — a little-known but crucial post that oversees a budget that approaches \$3 billion — is not a shabby consolation prize.

The Iowa Republican, who led the Trump transition's beachhead team for USDA and currently serves as the department's liaison to the White House, portrays himself as an economist — but his Ph.D. is in public administration. At Morningside College, a small liberal arts school in Sioux City, Clovis taught classes on business, management and public policy, according to internet archives, and didn't appear to publish any major peer-reviewed work.

He's on the record questioning the scientific consensus on climate change, a stance that helped fuel the criticism from Democrats and science advocates that emerged after ProPublica reported in May that Clovis was likely to be Trump's choice for USDA's chief scientist.

"If President Trump wants to keep Americans safe and healthy, ensure prosperity for farmers and rural communities, and follow the law, this nomination is the wrong choice," said Ricardo Salvador, director of the food and environment program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, which has led opposition to Clovis' pending nomination. He disputed the idea that a politically wired advocate for agricultural science would have greater impact than someone with deep research experience.

"These are not mutually exclusive possibilities," he said, "and the nation's food system and ag research investments should not be held hostage to such a false choice."

Senate Agriculture ranking member [Debbie Stabenow](#) (D-Mich.) said last week, after the White House announced Clovis' selection, that she has "strong concerns that Sam Clovis is not qualified" for the position.

Yet science groups and the land-grant universities that work with the division Clovis would lead have been noticeably quiet, choosing instead to avoid a political fight with a nominee who's close to the president, likely to be confirmed and expected to ultimately have much power over the level of federal funding their institutions are to be given.



Other groups, like the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, which represents historically black colleges and universities, jumped on the chance to back Clovis after the White House's announcement. "Shortly after the election results were announced, Dr. Clovis began meeting with TMCF to develop an action plan to deepen the USDA's relationship with our ag schools in order to help them build capacity, infrastructure and career paths for their graduates," said Johnny Taylor Jr., CEO of TMCF. "We are hopeful our positive working relationship with the USDA will continue with Secretary Purdue and, if confirmed, Dr. Sam Clovis."

As Clovis' credentials have publicly drawn fire, he's been quietly winning over rank-and-file at USDA, which was not seized by the chaos that engulfed other agencies, like EPA, during the first few months of the Trump administration. Clovis has proven himself to be a steady hand, impressed career staff and become well-liked, even by some of his critics, who privately acknowledge that tanking his nomination could yield a pick they would view as much worse.

Clovis is also known to have a direct line to the president, a level of access far above that which is usually enjoyed by USDA's head of research — something that is not lost on agricultural groups.

USDA officials, multiple sources said, have simply gotten over the fact that Clovis isn't a scientist. "Their first instinct, given his background, was to not like this guy," said Chuck Conner, president and CEO of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, who organized the industry coalition's letter. "But he's won them over in a big way."

Baise, a close ally of Clovis, emphasized the idea that the former professor possesses a rare blend of experience in academia and politics. "We don't have a lot of folks with Ph.Ds who have run for public office," Baise said.

In 2014, Clovis took a leave of absence from his Morningside College post to run for Senate, entering the GOP primary to fill the Iowa seat vacated by the retirement of former Sen. Tom Harkin. Clovis had a conservative talk radio show based out of Sioux City, but he was virtually unknown in Iowa politics. He surprised everyone by coming in second to [Joni Ernst](#), who went on to win the seat. Clovis even bested energy businessman Mark Jacobs, who had sunk more than \$3 million of his own money into his primary campaign. Clovis then ran unsuccessfully for state treasurer, one of his last iterations before he joined Trump's orbit.

Though Clovis' rise in politics has been meteoric, Morningside College wasn't interested in talking up its connection to the Trump administration official when POLITICO inquired about Clovis' academic record for this story. A spokesman for the college refused to answer questions about which classes Clovis taught there and what his research interests were. The spokesman also would not grant faculty members permission to talk about Clovis' time at the school. He left the college in 2015.

### **Climate science and a 'cool hand'**

Clovis' pending nomination has sparked a barrage of snarky headlines and tweets — perhaps more than any other subcabinet pick. "Trump Nominates Sam Clovis, a Dude Who is Not a Scientist, to Be Department of Agriculture's Top Scientist," blared [Gizmodo](#). "Incompetence Looms: Trump To Appoint Non-Scientist As USDA's Chief Scientist," said the headline of an op-

ed in [Forbes](#).

And fake news, that newly elevated element of American politics that will forever be linked to the 2016 campaign, has also attached itself to Clovis at times. A few days after the ProPublica report, a site called [USPOLN.com](#) ran a story claiming that Clovis had mocked scientists as "dumb regular people that think dinosaurs existed." The post got so much traction on social media that Snopes and PolitiFact both flagged it as a hoax.

Clovis' name has also repeatedly surfaced in relation to his involvement in another enduring aspect of the 2016 campaign — the Russia question. It was reportedly Clovis who [vetted Carter Page](#), an international businessman, to be a national security adviser to the Trump campaign. As of the summer of 2016, well after Page had joined the campaign, the FBI was said to be surveilling him, suspecting Page may have been acting as an agent of the Kremlin, The Washington Post reported; he was later dropped from the campaign.

But other than the fact Clovis is not a scientist, nothing about his background and work on the campaign and transition has gotten as much attention as his skepticism about climate change, in part because the division he would oversee conducts all manner of climate science research — from studying how to reduce the carbon footprint of food production to coming up with ways for farmers to adapt to more severe weather patterns.

When he was running for Senate in 2014, Clovis did an interview with Iowa Public Radio, during which the hosts pointed out that 97 percent of climate scientists agree that rising temperatures are "very likely due to human activities."

"Do you believe the science?" the hosts asked.

"I am extremely skeptical," he said without skipping a beat. "I have looked at the science and I have enough of a science background to know when I'm being boofed. And a lot of the science is junk science.

"It's not proven," he continued. "I don't think there's any substantive information available to me that doesn't raise as many questions as it does answers. So I'm a skeptic."

But those who have worked with Clovis are unnerved by the breathless criticism in the left-leaning media. They describe him as whip-smart, open-minded, jolly and self-deprecating. He also works long hours and avoids events in Washington that require schmoozing.

"People think he's going to be an a--hole, and then he's not," said one lobbyist who's worked with him.

Another Clovis supporter said the Iowan is "a guy with real balls," noting that one has to be "half-nuts" to fly an F-16 fighter jet, as Clovis did throughout his decadeslong career in the Air Force. He retired in 1996 as a colonel.

In Trumpland, Clovis has developed a reputation for being even-keeled amid an administration known for infighting and volatility. "He was always cool-headed," recalled Sid Miller, the controversial Texas agriculture commissioner who worked with Clovis on the campaign's

agricultural advisory committee. "A lot of us would get rattled when Donald Trump would have a bad day. Not Sam. He's a cool hand."

### **He saw victory outside city limits**

Clovis wasn't the kind of campaign operative who assumed victory and ignored political realities. He just happened to understand the political moment in the heartland, which ended up being key to Trump's victory. At an event in Washington just short of three weeks before Election Day, Clovis wasn't banking on his candidate winning.

"I have no idea how this is going to turn out," Clovis told POLITICO at the time.

Clovis had just spent the better part of two hours being peppered with questions about farm policy at the National Press Club in Washington. It was his first appearance before the D.C. hive, and the audience was skeptical, to say the least.

No one in the room, which was packed with food, ag and environmental lobbyists, had any idea who Clovis was. Some had seen him on CNN as a surrogate for Trump. Some had heard he'd ran unsuccessfully for Senate in Iowa. But they all couldn't figure out how a little-known professor and conservative talk radio host had become the Trump campaign's lead on agricultural policy.

Clovis, however, had clearly done his homework. He sat back in his chair, eyeglasses perched above his eyebrows, and jumped with ease from farm subsidies and food stamps to the complexities of the peanut program and conservation. He outlined policy stances that were surprisingly moderate. He hammered away on the need for better water quality, said he'd like to wean farmers off price supports, and expressed support for a legal immigrant workforce to meet agriculture's needs.

During the meeting, Clovis also offered brief thoughts on agricultural research, an issue on which he has almost no record. "I also think the research needs to be transparent," he said after endorsing voluntary GMO labeling, because "consumers have a right to know." He added: "If we have these demands, and we have to fund research in these areas, we should have some accountability on that funding; and the other aspect is it is transparent, to know what we're looking at and what we're investigating."

Clovis offered that one of his personal "pet rocks" is water policy. "I honestly believe if we ever have another civil war in this country, it'll be over water," he said.

After the meeting, even Democrats admitted that Clovis' breadth of knowledge had surprised them.

Trump, for his part, knew he needed to gin up support among rural voters to offset the bludgeoning he'd take in the cities, and he'd tasked Clovis with using farm policy to galvanize the heartland.

"With city limits in the rear-view mirror, it's Trump," Clovis told POLITICO after the Washington meeting, when asked about the widening gap in rural support between Hillary Clinton and Trump. It was something many in the mainstream media and political establishment

had missed or disregarded, but Clovis repeatedly pointed to the fact that Trump signs seemed to appear just outside of city limits by a staggering margin compared with Clinton signs.

"Not just yard signs; barn signs. Barns!" he laughed. "People have painted their barns. The sides of their houses. It's nuts," he continued. "There's a lot of angst out there. There really is."

Clovis then explained that the campaign's strategy was to try to make up for getting "trounced" in cities by cultivating hefty returns in rural counties.

And in that, Clovis and Trump certainly had politics on their side.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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**Pruitt spent significant time in Oklahoma in spring, records show** [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 07/24/2017 10:49 AM EDT

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt spent 43 days in March, April and May on trips to his home state of Oklahoma, according to travel records obtained by the watchdog group Environmental Integrity Project.

The [records](#), released under the Freedom of Information Act, include weekend trips home as well as official business in the state, such as a tour of a chemical plant or an awards event hosted by the Oklahoma Well Strippers Association. The records indicate Pruitt [sometimes](#) paid his own airfare but often went at the government's expense.

"These travel records show that Administrator Pruitt is more focused on cultivating his relationships with industry and conservative political organizations in his home state of Oklahoma than he is on protecting the environment and the public health for the rest of America," EIP Executive Director Eric Schaeffer said in a statement.

The group will ask EPA's inspector general to investigate Pruitt's travel Monday, an EIP spokesman said. As precedent, he pointed to a 2015 IG [report](#) on a regional administrator who scheduled more than half of his official trips to areas near his home in California's Orange County, some of which the IG questioned.

EPA spokeswoman Liz Bowman said in a statement that Pruitt was focused on running EPA, "not running for elected office. The administrator's travel, whether to Utah, Michigan or Oklahoma, all serves the purpose of hearing from hard-working Americans about how EPA can better serve the American people."

Pruitt said at an industry conference in May that his wife would join him in living in Washington this summer since both their children are both now in college, which could decrease his weekend trips home to Oklahoma.

Pruitt's predecessor, Gina McCarthy, paid her own way for trips home to Boston approximately every other week, according to an EIP spokesman.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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## **Senate Democrats ask Interior IG to probe career staff reshuffle** [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 07/24/2017 03:49 PM EDT

Senate Energy and Natural Resources ranking Democrat [Maria Cantwell](#) and seven of her colleagues today asked the Interior Department's inspector general to investigate the agency's recent reassignment of a number of senior executive staff.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in June reassigned about 50 senior executive employees, including Joel Clement, who was moved from a managerial position involving climate change issues to a job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies.

Moving senior executives from the positions in which they may best use their expertise to jobs "where their talents are wasted would constitute a serious act of mismanagement, a gross waste of public funds, and an abuse of authority," the senators said in the [letter](#) to Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall.

The senators acknowledged that Zinke is allowed to shuffle senior executives around. But they argued the law requires for reassignments to be made to best accomplish the agency's mission, promote program continuity and to provide for an executive system that is free from improper political interference.

"Any suggestion that the department is reassigning SES employees to force them to resign, to silence their voices or to punish them for the conscientious performance of their public duties is extremely troubling and calls for the closest examination," the letter said.

The letter was also signed by Senate Finance ranking member [Ron Wyden](#) and Sens. [Mazie Hirono](#) (D-Hawaii), [Martin Heinrich](#) (D-N.M.), [Bernie Sanders](#) (I-Vt.), [Tammy Duckworth](#) (D-Ill.), [Debbie Stabenow](#) (D-Mich.) and [Al Franken](#) (D-Minn.)

**WHAT'S NEXT:** It remains to be seen whether the IG will launch an investigation.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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## **Ebell: EPA eyeing Koonin for 'red team' climate science review** [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 07/24/2017 03:22 PM EDT

EPA is considering picking Steven Koonin, a top DOE official during former President Barack Obama's first term, to run its "red team" review of climate science, according to Myron Ebell of the Competitive Enterprise Institute.

Koonin suggested the formation of a red team in an April Wall Street Journal [piece](#), where he

said such a review "would shine much-needed light on the scientific debates" surrounding climate change. Koonin has long been a critic of climate change science, writing in the Journal in 2014 that the science "is not settled."

Some climate scientists and environmentalists have criticized such a review as giving a minority scientific opinion an outsized voice and laying the groundwork for revoking the 2009 endangerment finding that underlies all of EPA's greenhouse gas regulations.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt, who called Koonin's idea "very exciting," has raised the idea of a televised debate.

Ebell, who briefly led President Donald Trump's transition effort at EPA, said today that he is not directly involved in the search but has been told by an "impeccable" source that Koonin is the top choice to lead the climate red team.

A theoretical physicist by training, Koonin was undersecretary for science at the DOE from 2009 to 2011, and since 2012 has been director of the New York University Center for Urban Science and Progress. He previously was chief scientist for BP and provost of the California Institute of Technology.

Koonin did not respond to requests for comment. EPA did not immediately respond to a request for comment today.

To view online [click here](#).

[Back](#)

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Yes, very	Somewhat	Neutral	Not really	Not at all

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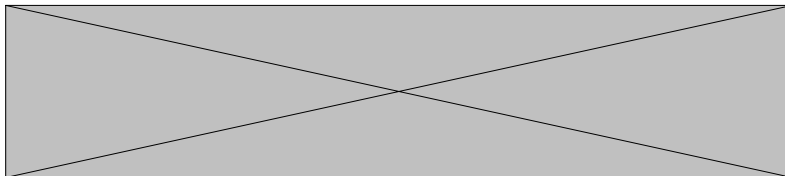
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**To:** Heather Swift[Heather\_Swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Michael Bastasch  
**Sent:** 2017-07-25T08:32:35-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** So what's the real deal with this Joel Clement guy?  
**Received:** 2017-07-25T08:33:23-04:00

He claims to be a whistleblower, but he doesn't seem to be blowing the whistle on anything. Like, were you guys really targeting him? Seems he's trying to become a martyr.

--

Michael Bastasch  
Daily Caller News Foundation



**To:** Michael Bastasch[mike@dailycallernewsfoundation.org]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-25T08:34:38-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: So what's the real deal with this Joel Clement guy?  
**Received:** 2017-07-25T08:35:24-04:00

Chat off the record later?

-

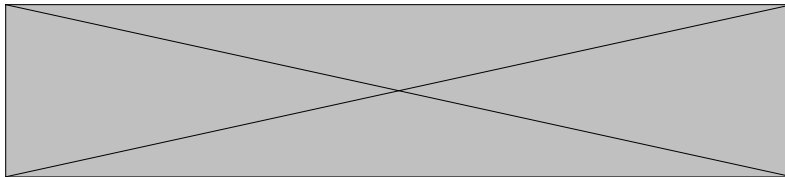
Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
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On Tue, Jul 25, 2017 at 8:32 AM, Michael Bastasch <[mike@dailycallernewsfoundation.org](mailto:mike@dailycallernewsfoundation.org)> wrote:

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Michael Bastasch  
Daily Caller News Foundation





**To:** Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Michael Bastasch  
**Sent:** 2017-07-25T08:36:19-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: So what's the real deal with this Joel Clement guy?  
**Received:** 2017-07-25T08:37:07-04:00

Ya sure. Just give me a ring when you're free -- (b)(6)

On Tue, Jul 25, 2017 at 8:34 AM, Swift, Heather <heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov> wrote:

Chat off the record later?

-

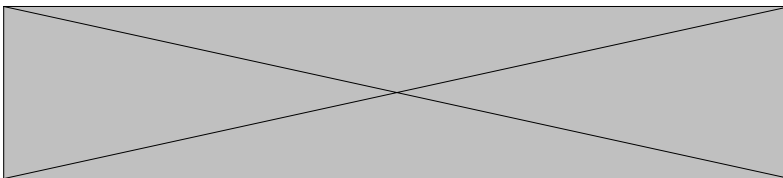
Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

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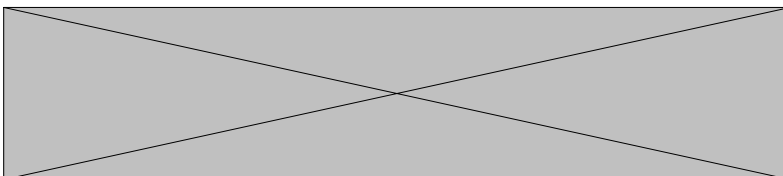
--

Michael Bastasch  
Daily Caller News Foundation



--

Michael Bastasch  
Daily Caller News Foundation



**To:** Heather\_Swift@ios.doi.gov[Heather\_Swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Davidson, Joe  
**Sent:** 2017-07-25T12:00:38-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Union of Concerned Scientists report and Joel Clement  
**Received:** 2017-07-25T12:00:50-04:00

Hi Heather,

I'm writing a Washington Post Federal Insider column today about a Union of Concerned Scientists [report](#) titled "Sideline Science Since Day One: How the Trump Administration Has Harmed Public Health and Safety in Its First Six Months."

The report was released shortly after Joel Clement, an Interior scientist, published a [Washington Post article](#) about 50 senior department employees being involuntarily reassigned.

I'd like to get Interior's reaction to the report. Among other things, it says:

*"The Trump administration is attempting to delegitimize science... and it is creating a hostile environment for federal agency scientists who serve the public.*

*This is a new era in which political interference in science is more likely and more frequent and will present serious risks to the health and safety of the American people...*

*Under the Trump administration, these threats to the federal scientific enterprise have escalated markedly...*

*In a few short months, the Trump administration has under-mined the process by which science informs the policy making process. The administration has shown a blatant disregard for scientific facts and evidence, appointing officials with a track record of misrepresenting scientific information, overruling the recommendations of scientists on exposure to toxic pesticides, removing scientific information from agency websites, and dismissing independent science advisors."*

Regarding Mr. Clement's transfer, you told my colleague Juliet Eilperin that Secretary Zinke has long stated his intention to reorganize the department. Does Interior have any comment on Mr. Clement's contention that his transfer was retaliation against him *"for speaking out publicly about the dangers that climate change poses to Alaska Native communities. During the months preceding my reassignment, I raised the issue with White House officials, senior Interior officials and the international community, most recently at a U.N. conference in June. It is clear to me that the administration was so*

*uncomfortable with this work, and my disclosures, that I was reassigned with the intent to coerce me into leaving the federal government."*

I am on deadline and will file my column this afternoon.

Thank you.

Best,

Joe

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*The Washington Post*  
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**To:** Davidson, Joe[joe.davidson@washpost.com]; Interior Press[interior\_press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-25T12:07:19-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Union of Concerned Scientists report and Joel Clement  
**Received:** 2017-07-25T12:08:06-04:00

Hello Joe - The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

**Statement from June regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

-

Heather Swift  
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*Twitter: @JoeDavidsonWP*  
*Website: [wapo.st/JoeDavidson](http://wapo.st/JoeDavidson)*

**To:** Mashburn, John K. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]; Flynn, Matthew (b)(6) gov]; Uli, Gabriella M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]; Murphy, Christine M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]; Paranzino, Anthony M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]  
**From:** Domenech, Douglas  
**Sent:** 2017-07-25T13:48:39-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Interior Cabinet Affairs Report for 7/25/17  
**Received:** 2017-07-25T13:49:07-04:00  
[DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 7-25-17.docx](#)

Attached and copied below.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 7/25/17**

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor  
Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

- **NOTE: BERNHARDT WINS SENATE CONFIRMATION:** Senators voted 53-43 Monday evening to confirm David Bernhardt's nomination as deputy secretary at Interior. Five members of the Democratic caucus - Michael Bennet, Joe Donnelly, Heidi Heitkamp, Angus King and Joe Manchin - joined all Republicans in supporting his bid to serve as Secretary Ryan Zinke's No. 2. "David's extensive experience serving under previous Interior secretaries, his esteemed legal career, and down-right love of our land and resources is exactly what is needed to help streamline government," Zinke said in a statement after the vote.

- Bernhardt Day 1 will be August 1.

- **Status of the Secretary**

TODAY: The Secretary is in Washington and will travel to OH with POTUS.  
Meeting with Philip Howard, Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling.  
Call with Rep. Costa.  
Call with Senator Schatz.  
Travel to Ohio, American Heroes POTUS event.

**THIS WEEK:**

7/26 Wednesday: Hold for Sen. Merkley; Tour with Mayor Bowser; Meeting with Rep. Aderholt and James Swanson; Travel to El Paso, TX. (political event)  
7/27 Thursday: Las Cruces, NM Monuments Tour; helicopter tour of Organ mtns Desert peaks with Fort Bliss, roundtable with ranchers and stakeholders, meeting on border security, meeting with ranchers on Rio Grande del Norte NM, media availability, driving tour with BLM  
7/28 Friday: Las Cruces, NM; Monuments Tour; hike in monument with veterans, tribal meetings, meeting with friends of organ mountains.  
7/29 Saturday: Santa Fe, NM / Sabinoso Wilderness; Sabinoso Wilderness horseback riding with Senators Heinrich and Udall.  
7/30 fly to Las Vegas NV, helicopter tour of basin and range NM and Gold Butte NM, TBD dinner with Senators.  
7/31 Round table with Friends Group on monuments, round table with elected officials, meeting with Moapa tribe, red eye to D.C.

8/1 Day One Bernhardt.

NOTE: the Secretary will be on personal leave August 5-19 out of the country. (Greece and Turkey)

### **Media TODAY**

(Last Night) **INTERIOR SECRETARY ZINKE APPLAUDS CONFIRMATION OF DAVID BERNHARDT AS DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR**

WASHINGTON – Today, Department of the Interior veteran David Bernhardt was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as the Interior's Deputy Secretary. He will be sworn-in in the coming days.

"Finally, after months of waiting for confirmation in the Senate, I'm excited to welcome David Bernhardt back to the Department to serve as Interior's Deputy Secretary," said Secretary Ryan Zinke. "David's extensive experience serving under previous Interior secretaries, his esteemed legal career, and down-right love of our land and resources is exactly what is needed to help streamline government and make the Interior and our public lands work for the American economy. I look forward to swearing him in and having him on board to help put America First."

### **AMERICAN HEROES: EMPLOYEES STEP UP TO THE CHALLENGE AT INTERIOR**

You don't have to wear a cape to be a hero. At the Interior Department, ordinary men and women sometimes find themselves called to act in extraordinary circumstances. Many have gone above and beyond their job descriptions. Some get recognized, and others spend their time quietly protecting the nation's public and tribal lands, and those who visit them.

### **DOI COMMS REPORT**

#### **National Park Service**

- Week of July 24: Local NPS Release: The Reconstruction Era National Monument will hold three public listening sessions (not related to July 28 Reconstruction Era Theme Study) in Beaufort, Port Royal, and St. Helena Island, South Carolina, as part of the development of a foundation document for this new park. Targeted stakeholder meetings will also be held in the respective communities during the day to identify the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the National Park Service in setting up these new areas and also provide input into the development of the foundation document and interpretive themes.
- July 25: Local NPS Release: The National Park Service will announce a 30-day public comment period on the Glacier National Park Lake McDonald Properties Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA). Following the public review and comment period, the park will prepare a formal decision document. The EA analyzes alternatives to manage NPS-owned properties, including buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, adjacent to Lake McDonald. The proposed alternative uses an adaptive approach that identifies a sequence of management options for each property, which for most properties begins with historic leasing, park or concessioner use, or stabilization of properties. The last option in the adaptive management approach would be removal of buildings. The management plan has garnered local media and public interest with little to no controversy and a lot of interest in leasing the properties.



- TBD: National NPS Release: NPS announcement of annual Rutgers report on NPS Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program economic impact. Tax credits 2016 contributed \$12.3 billion in output to the U.S. economy, added \$6.2 billion in GDP. Historic preservation tax incentives encourage investments in historic preservation and revitalization of communities small and large across the country.

#### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will announce it has apportioned \$50 million to state fish and wildlife agencies for developing and implementing programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats. The funding is provided through the FWS's State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program and is distributed through an apportionment formula in accordance with the Appropriations Act.
- July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a final rule establishing the 2017-18 hunting seasons and bag limits for certain migratory game birds to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.
- July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to establish annual hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds for the 2018-19 hunting season to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.
- July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to approve the shot for hunting waterfowl and coots. FWS has concluded that this type of shot left in the terrestrial or aquatic environments is unlikely to adversely affect fish, wildlife, or their habitats. Approving this shot formulation would increase the nontoxic shot options for hunters. Interested stakeholders include the Flyway Councils, state wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations and hunters.
- TBD: FWS Local Release: FWS plans to announce the notice of availability of the revised draft recovery plan for the giant garter snake in California. There may be some controversy with cost estimates associated with this plan.

#### Bureau of Land Management

- Week of July 24: Local BLM Release: BLM-CO Little Snake Field Office will announce a 30-day public scoping period for an environmental assessment evaluating a coal Lease by Application (LBA) from Peabody Energy's Twentymile Coal Foidel Creek Mine near Hayden. The LBA is for 640 acres of federal coal underneath private surface. The coal would be mined by underground methods with no surface disturbance. The mine estimates it could recover 4.1 million tons of coal, generating approximately \$13 million in royalties, half of which would go to the state. The lease would help the mine continue to employ 365 people.
- July 25: Local BLM Release: BLM-Eastern States, in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service, will hold public meetings in St. Paul, MN, and Virginia, MN, to solicit comments regarding the proposed 20-year withdrawal of 234,328 acres of Federal

minerals from national forest system lands on the Superior National Forest within the Rainy River Watershed. Public comments received during project scoping will inform development of an EIS to study the proposed mineral withdrawal.

- July 21 -26: The sage-grouse task force team comprised of BLM, USGS, USFWS, USFS, and Western Governors' offices will work in four subgroups to review a draft plan in response to S.O. 3353. The subgroups pertain to plan and policy review, fire and invasive species, data and science and wildlife management.
- July 25 – 26: Local BLM Release: BLM-WY Pinedale and Rock Springs field offices will hold two open houses to discuss the Normally Pressured Lance Natural Gas Development Project with local communities. Public comments will be collected on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement released last week.
- July 26: BLM acting Deputy Director for Operations John Ruhs will attend the Nevada Sheriffs' Association meeting and provide a "BLM 101" presentation.
- July 26: BLM-AK will participate in the annual Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) forum, focusing on issues that relate to potential sites within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and contaminated lands and mine sites in Alaska.
- July 26: BLM-CA Bishop Field Office will meet with representatives from Mono County, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and a private landowner to discuss riparian habitat improvement for bi-state sage-grouse through alterations in county road maintenance and installation of culverts and drainage dips.

#### Bureau of Reclamation

- July 24-25: Reclamation will meet with stakeholders in Klamath Falls, Oregon, to kick off the stakeholder engagement process on the reinitiated ESA consultation on Klamath Project Operations. Organizations expected to attend the meeting include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Yurok Tribe, Karuk Tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, The Klamath Tribes, Klamath Water Users Association, and PacifiCorps.

#### Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- July 26 (tent.): BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Notice to Stakeholders on the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Cape Wind Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Note to Stakeholders on Information Transfer Meeting to be held in New Orleans August 22-24.

#### Office of Insular Affairs

- July 25: Hearing before the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, regarding the LBJ Hospital in American Samoa.
- July 25 or 26: Local IA Release: Marshall Islands grants release announces Compact Infrastructure \$149,436; Ebeye Special Needs \$300,000; Health Care Program for four Atolls (Sec 177) \$697,387.

**CONGRESSIONAL**

Tuesday, July 25, 2017

10:00am: House Natural Resources Indian, Insular, and Alaska Natives Affairs Subcommittee Oversight Hearing Assessing Current Conditions and Challenges at the Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center in American Samoa  
Witness: Thomas Bussanich, Director of Budget, Insular Affairs

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

9:45am: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee

Legislative Hearing on S. 32, California Desert Protection and Recreation Act; S. 90, Red River Gradient Boundary Survey Act; S.357, Santa Ana River Wash Plan Land Exchange Act; S.436, San Juan County Settlement Implementation Act; S.467, Mohave County Federal Land Management Act; S.468, Historic Routes Preservation Act; S.614, Recreation and Public Purposes Act Commercial Recreation Concessions Pilot Program Act; S.785, Alaska Native Veterans Land Allotment Equity Act; S.837, Southern Utah Open OHV Areas Act; S.884, Small Miners Waiver Act; S.941, Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act; S.1149, To amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to repeal a provision limiting the export of timber harvested from land conveyed to the Kake Tribal Corporation; S.1230, Water Rights Protection Act; S.1271, Fowler and Boskoff Peaks Designation Act; and S.1548, Oregon Wildlands Act

Witness: John Ruhs, Acting Deputy Director for Operations, BLM

2:30pm: Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

Oversight Hearing on the GAO Reports on Human Trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States

Witness: Jason Thompson, Acting Director, Office of Justice Services, BIA

-

**Political Appointee Update**

Two new appointees started today bringing DOI politicals on board = 52

4 nominated awaiting confirmation.

Nominees Combs, Berman, and Domenech participated in a Senate hearing on Thursday.

Nominee Joe Balash to serve as the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management has been announced.

**Secretary Speaking Invitations**

**Accepted**

7/25 Ohio with POTUS. American Hero event.

7/26 fly to El Paso, TX

7/27-31 National Monument Review Tour Nevada and New Mexico

8/5-20 Personal

**Outstanding Invitations in Process**

8/22 - 2017 Lake Tahoe Summit invited by Sen. Feinstein and Sen. Heller (Lake Tahoe, CA)

8/25-26 - Steamboat Institute's 9th Annual Freedom Conference & Festival (Steamboat Springs, CO)

8/30 - West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (White Sulphur Springs, WV)

Declining

7/31-8/2 - FBI National Academy Associates Annual Training Conference (DC)

8/2 - American Legion Northwest Regional Baseball Tournament's Opening Ceremony  
General Welcome (Missoula, MT)

8/5 - Glacier National Park Conservancy remarks at Annual Backpacker's Ball  
(Whitefish/Kalispell)

8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)

8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)

8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)

Emergency Management

In California, the Detwiler Fire, located in Mariposa County (CAL FIRE), has burned 78,900 (+2,650) acres and is 60 (+15)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 5,013 (-30) personnel, including 132 (+19) DOI personnel. There are 1,500 (no change) residential structures threatened and 4,968 (no change) evacuees. Road closures on Highway 49 continue to impede access to Yosemite National Park, and high power transmission lines, which supply power to the park, continue to be impacted by the fire. Demobilization of resources is expected to begin today, and full containment of the Detwiler Fire expected on August 5.

In Montana, the Lodgepole Complex Fire, located in Garfield County (BLM), has burned 250,000 (+24,000) acres and is 20 (+15)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 IMT with 611 (+396) personnel, including 81 (+55) DOI personnel. There are 145 (no change) residential structures threatened and 50 (no change) evacuees. Sixteen (+4) residences have been destroyed and additional perimeter growth is expected over the next few days. Three (no change) civilian injuries and three (+1) responder injuries have been reported to date. Full containment is expected on August 2.

The Canyon Ferry and Helena Valley dams in Montana have been at an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) Response Level 1 since July 6, when a magnitude 5.8 earthquake occurred near Lincoln, Montana. The Bureau of Reclamation has returned both dams to normal operations as they did not identify any damage or issues as a result of the earthquake.

Outside Media of Interest

**Senate Approves Nominee For No. 2 At Interior.**

The AP (7/24) reports that the Senate in a vote of 53-43 on Monday confirmed David Bernhardt, a lawyer and former Interior Department official, as deputy Interior secretary. Democrats criticized Bernhardt "saying he continued to advise a California water district even after he withdrew his formal registration as a lobbyist last year." But Republicans "called Bernhardt a capable lawyer with vast experience in issues important to the West, including endangered species, water use and development of public lands."

**Trump's Interior Dept To Chop Months Off How Long It Takes To Get An Oil Drilling Permit.**

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Doug Domenech  
Senior Advisor  
US Department of the Interior

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

**To:** Scott Hommel[scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov]; Magallanes, Downey[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]; Laura Rigas[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; James Cason[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]; Micah Chambers[micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov]; Daniel Jorjani[daniel\_jorjani@ios.doi.gov]; Mashburn, Lori[lori\_mashburn@ios.doi.gov]; Bauserman, Christine[christine\_bauserman@ios.doi.gov]; Caroline Boulton[caroline\_boulton@ios.doi.gov]; Thiele, Aaron[aaron\_thiele@ios.doi.gov]; Willens, Todd[todd\_willens@ios.doi.gov]; Getto, Leila[leila\_getto@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Domenech, Douglas  
**Sent:** 2017-07-25T13:50:32-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Interior Cabinet Affairs Report for 7/25/17  
**Received:** 2017-07-25T13:51:00-04:00  
[DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 7-25-17.docx](#)

Attached and copied below.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 7/25/17**

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor  
Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

- **NOTE: BERNHARDT WINS SENATE CONFIRMATION:** Senators voted 53-43 Monday evening to confirm David Bernhardt's nomination as deputy secretary at Interior. Five members of the Democratic caucus - Michael Bennet, Joe Donnelly, Heidi Heitkamp, Angus King and Joe Manchin - joined all Republicans in supporting his bid to serve as Secretary Ryan Zinke's No. 2. "David's extensive experience serving under previous Interior secretaries, his esteemed legal career, and down-right love of our land and resources is exactly what is needed to help streamline government," Zinke said in a statement after the vote.

- Bernhardt Day 1 will be August 1.

- **Status of the Secretary**

TODAY: The Secretary is in Washington and will travel to OH with POTUS.  
Meeting with Philip Howard, Senior Counsel, Covington & Burling.  
Call with Rep. Costa.  
Call with Senator Schatz.  
Travel to Ohio, American Heroes POTUS event.

**THIS WEEK:**

7/26 Wednesday: Hold for Sen. Merkley; Tour with Mayor Bowser; Meeting with Rep. Aderholt and James Swanson; Travel to El Paso, TX. (political event)  
7/27 Thursday: Las Cruces, NM Monuments Tour; helicopter tour of Organ mtns Desert peaks with Fort Bliss, roundtable with ranchers and stakeholders, meeting on border security, meeting with ranchers on Rio Grande del Norte NM, media availability, driving tour with BLM  
7/28 Friday: Las Cruces, NM; Monuments Tour; hike in monument with veterans, tribal meetings, meeting with friends of organ mountains.  
7/29 Saturday: Santa Fe, NM / Sabinoso Wilderness; Sabinoso Wilderness horseback riding with Senators Heinrich and Udall.  
7/30 fly to Las Vegas NV, helicopter tour of basin and range NM and Gold Butte NM, TBD

dinner with Senators.

7/31 Round table with Friends Group on monuments, round table with elected officials, meeting with Moapa tribe, red eye to D.C.

8/1 Day One Bernhardt.

NOTE: the Secretary will be on personal leave August 5-19 out of the country. (Greece and Turkey)

### **Media TODAY**

(Last Night) **INTERIOR SECRETARY ZINKE APPLAUDS CONFIRMATION OF DAVID BERNHARDT AS DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR**

WASHINGTON – Today, Department of the Interior veteran David Bernhardt was confirmed by the U.S. Senate to serve as the Interior's Deputy Secretary. He will be sworn-in in the coming days.

"Finally, after months of waiting for confirmation in the Senate, I'm excited to welcome David Bernhardt back to the Department to serve as Interior's Deputy Secretary," said Secretary Ryan Zinke. "David's extensive experience serving under previous Interior secretaries, his esteemed legal career, and down-right love of our land and resources is exactly what is needed to help streamline government and make the Interior and our public lands work for the American economy. I look forward to swearing him in and having him on board to help put America First."

### **AMERICAN HEROES: EMPLOYEES STEP UP TO THE CHALLENGE AT INTERIOR**

You don't have to wear a cape to be a hero. At the Interior Department, ordinary men and women sometimes find themselves called to act in extraordinary circumstances. Many have gone above and beyond their job descriptions. Some get recognized, and others spend their time quietly protecting the nation's public and tribal lands, and those who visit them.

### **DOI COMMS REPORT**

#### **National Park Service**

□ Week of July 24: Local NPS Release: The Reconstruction Era National Monument will hold three public listening sessions (not related to July 28 Reconstruction Era Theme Study) in Beaufort, Port Royal, and St. Helena Island, South Carolina, as part of the development of a foundation document for this new park. Targeted stakeholder meetings will also be held in the respective communities during the day to identify the biggest challenges and opportunities facing the National Park Service in setting up these new areas and also provide input into the development of the foundation document and interpretive themes.

□ July 25: Local NPS Release: The National Park Service will announce a 30-day public comment period on the Glacier National Park Lake McDonald Properties Management Plan Environmental Assessment (EA). Following the public review and comment period, the park will prepare a formal decision document. The EA analyzes alternatives to manage NPS-owned properties, including buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, adjacent to Lake McDonald. The proposed alternative uses an adaptive approach that identifies a sequence of management options for each property, which for most properties begins with historic leasing, park or concessioner use, or stabilization of properties. The last option in the adaptive management approach would be



removal of buildings. The management plan has garnered local media and public interest with little to no controversy and a lot of interest in leasing the properties.

- TBD: National NPS Release: NPS announcement of annual Rutgers report on NPS Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program economic impact. Tax credits 2016 contributed \$12.3 billion in output to the U.S. economy, added \$6.2 billion in GDP. Historic preservation tax incentives encourage investments in historic preservation and revitalization of communities small and large across the country.

#### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will announce it has apportioned \$50 million to state fish and wildlife agencies for developing and implementing programs that benefit wildlife and their habitats. The funding is provided through the FWS's State Wildlife Grants (SWG) program and is distributed through an apportionment formula in accordance with the Appropriations Act.
- July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a final rule establishing the 2017-18 hunting seasons and bag limits for certain migratory game birds to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.
- July TBD: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to establish annual hunting regulations for certain migratory game birds for the 2018-19 hunting season to fulfill our responsibilities to the four international conventions to protect and manage migratory game birds. A prepared statement will be provided on our website with a link to the proposed rule.
- July TBD: National FWS Release: FWS will deliver to the Federal Register, a proposal to approve the shot for hunting waterfowl and coots. FWS has concluded that this type of shot left in the terrestrial or aquatic environments is unlikely to adversely affect fish, wildlife, or their habitats. Approving this shot formulation would increase the nontoxic shot options for hunters. Interested stakeholders include the Flyway Councils, state wildlife agencies, non-governmental organizations and hunters.
- TBD: FWS Local Release: FWS plans to announce the notice of availability of the revised draft recovery plan for the giant garter snake in California. There may be some controversy with cost estimates associated with this plan.

#### Bureau of Land Management

- Week of July 24: Local BLM Release: BLM-CO Little Snake Field Office will announce a 30-day public scoping period for an environmental assessment evaluating a coal Lease by Application (LBA) from Peabody Energy's Twentymile Coal Foidel Creek Mine near Hayden. The LBA is for 640 acres of federal coal underneath private surface. The coal would be mined by underground methods with no surface disturbance. The mine estimates it could recover 4.1 million tons of coal, generating approximately \$13 million in royalties, half of which would go to the state. The lease would help the mine continue to employ 365 people.
- July 25: Local BLM Release: BLM-Eastern States, in conjunction with the U.S.

Forest Service, will hold public meetings in St. Paul, MN, and Virginia, MN, to solicit comments regarding the proposed 20-year withdrawal of 234,328 acres of Federal minerals from national forest system lands on the Superior National Forest within the Rainy River Watershed. Public comments received during project scoping will inform development of an EIS to study the proposed mineral withdrawal.

- July 21 -26: The sage-grouse task force team comprised of BLM, USGS, USFWS, USFS, and Western Governors' offices will work in four subgroups to review a draft plan in response to S.O. 3353. The subgroups pertain to plan and policy review, fire and invasive species, data and science and wildlife management.
- July 25 – 26: Local BLM Release: BLM-WY Pinedale and Rock Springs field offices will hold two open houses to discuss the Normally Pressured Lance Natural Gas Development Project with local communities. Public comments will be collected on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement released last week.
- July 26: BLM acting Deputy Director for Operations John Ruhs will attend the Nevada Sheriffs' Association meeting and provide a "BLM 101" presentation.
- July 26: BLM-AK will participate in the annual Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) forum, focusing on issues that relate to potential sites within the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska and contaminated lands and mine sites in Alaska.
- July 26: BLM-CA Bishop Field Office will meet with representatives from Mono County, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and a private landowner to discuss riparian habitat improvement for bi-state sage-grouse through alterations in county road maintenance and installation of culverts and drainage dips.

#### Bureau of Reclamation

- July 24-25: Reclamation will meet with stakeholders in Klamath Falls, Oregon, to kick off the stakeholder engagement process on the reinitiated ESA consultation on Klamath Project Operations. Organizations expected to attend the meeting include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Yurok Tribe, Karuk Tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, The Klamath Tribes, Klamath Water Users Association, and PacifiCorps.

#### Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

- July 26 (tent.): BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Notice to Stakeholders on the Notice of Availability (NOA) for the Cape Wind Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS).
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Note to Stakeholders on Information Transfer Meeting to be held in New Orleans August 22-24.

#### Office of Insular Affairs

- July 25: Hearing before the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs, regarding the LBJ Hospital in American Samoa.
- July 25 or 26: Local IA Release: Marshall Islands grants release announces Compact Infrastructure \$149,436; Ebeye Special Needs \$300,000; Health Care Program for four

Atolls (Sec 177) \$697,387.

- **CONGRESSIONAL**

Tuesday, July 25, 2017

10:00am: House Natural Resources Indian, Insular, and Alaska Natives Affairs Subcommittee Oversight Hearing Assessing Current Conditions and Challenges at the Lyndon B. Johnson Tropical Medical Center in American Samoa

Witness: Thomas Bussanich, Director of Budget, Insular Affairs

Wednesday, July 26, 2017

9:45am: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Lands, Forests, and Mining Subcommittee

Legislative Hearing on S. 32, California Desert Protection and Recreation Act; S. 90, Red River Gradient Boundary Survey Act; S.357, Santa Ana River Wash Plan Land Exchange Act; S.436, San Juan County Settlement Implementation Act; S.467, Mohave County Federal Land Management Act; S.468, Historic Routes Preservation Act; S.614, Recreation and Public Purposes Act Commercial Recreation Concessions Pilot Program Act; S.785, Alaska Native Veterans Land Allotment Equity Act; S.837, Southern Utah Open OHV Areas Act; S.884, Small Miners Waiver Act; S.941, Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act; S.1149, To amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to repeal a provision limiting the export of timber harvested from land conveyed to the Kake Tribal Corporation; S.1230, Water Rights Protection Act; S.1271, Fowler and Boskoff Peaks Designation Act; and S.1548, Oregon Wildlands Act

Witness: John Ruhs, Acting Deputy Director for Operations, BLM

2:30pm: Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

Oversight Hearing on the GAO Reports on Human Trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Natives in the United States

Witness: Jason Thompson, Acting Director, Office of Justice Services, BIA

- **Political Appointee Update**

Two new appointees started today bringing DOI politicals on board = 52

4 nominated awaiting confirmation.

Nominees Combs, Berman, and Domenech participated in a Senate hearing on Thursday.

Nominee Joe Balash to serve as the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management has been announced.

**Secretary Speaking Invitations**

**Accepted**

7/25 Ohio with POTUS. American Hero event.

7/26 fly to El Paso, TX

7/27-31 National Monument Review Tour Nevada and New Mexico

8/5-20 Personal

**Outstanding Invitations in Process**

8/22 - 2017 Lake Tahoe Summit invited by Sen. Feinstein and Sen. Heller (Lake Tahoe, CA)  
8/25-26 - Steamboat Institute's 9th Annual Freedom Conference & Festival (Steamboat Springs, CO)  
8/30 - West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (White Sulphur Springs, WV)

Declining

7/31-8/2 - FBI National Academy Associates Annual Training Conference (DC)  
8/2 - American Legion Northwest Regional Baseball Tournament's Opening Ceremony General Welcome (Missoula, MT)  
8/5 - Glacier National Park Conservancy remarks at Annual Backpacker's Ball (Whitefish/Kalispell)  
8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)  
8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)  
8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)

Emergency Management

In California, the Detwiler Fire, located in Mariposa County (CAL FIRE), has burned 78,900 (+2,650) acres and is 60 (+15)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-1 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 5,013 (-30) personnel, including 132 (+19) DOI personnel. There are 1,500 (no change) residential structures threatened and 4,968 (no change) evacuees. Road closures on Highway 49 continue to impede access to Yosemite National Park, and high power transmission lines, which supply power to the park, continue to be impacted by the fire. Demobilization of resources is expected to begin today, and full containment of the Detwiler Fire expected on August 5.

In Montana, the Lodgepole Complex Fire, located in Garfield County (BLM), has burned 250,000 (+24,000) acres and is 20 (+15)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 IMT with 611 (+396) personnel, including 81 (+55) DOI personnel. There are 145 (no change) residential structures threatened and 50 (no change) evacuees. Sixteen (+4) residences have been destroyed and additional perimeter growth is expected over the next few days. Three (no change) civilian injuries and three (+1) responder injuries have been reported to date. Full containment is expected on August 2.

The Canyon Ferry and Helena Valley dams in Montana have been at an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) Response Level 1 since July 6, when a magnitude 5.8 earthquake occurred near Lincoln, Montana. The Bureau of Reclamation has returned both dams to normal operations as they did not identify any damage or issues as a result of the earthquake.

Outside Media of Interest

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**To:** Mattox, Kuae[Kuae.Mattox@turner.com]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]; Garate, Marcelo[Marcelo.Garate@turner.com]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T08:48:23-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT: CNN/NEW DAY re: Joel Clement for tomorrow, July 26  
**Received:** 2017-07-26T08:49:11-04:00

Hi Kuae - next time would you mind reaching out before 11:00PM. We had no chance to get back to you before the hit. I saw you pulled the statement from the WaPo.

### **Statement regarding the op-ed**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

### **Statement from June regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

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Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
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On Tue, Jul 25, 2017 at 11:00 PM, 'Mattox, Kuae' via Interior Press  
<[interior\\_press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:interior_press@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Greetings,

This is Kuae Mattox at CNN's morning show New Day. We will have Joel Clement on New Day **at 7:48am ET tomorrow morning (7/26)** and would like to request a statement from the Department of the Interior re: Clement and the whistleblower disclosure that he filed

recently to include as part of our segment. Please reach out to us at your very earliest convenience. Looping in my colleague Marcelo Garate who will be in the office overnight.

Background:

Joel Clement was director of the Office of Policy Analysis at the U.S. Interior Department until last week. He is now a senior adviser at the department's Office of Natural Resources Revenue. On June 15, he says he was one of about 50 senior department employees who received letters informing them of involuntary reassignments. Last Wednesday, he says he filed two forms — a complaint and a disclosure of information — with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel “because eliminating my role coordinating federal engagement and leaving my former position empty exacerbate the already significant threat to the health and the safety of certain Alaska Native communities.”

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/im-a-scientist-the-trump-administration-reassigned-me-for-speaking-up-about-climate-change/2017/07/19/389b8dce-6b12-11e7-9c15-177740635e83\\_story.html?tid=a\\_inl&utm\\_term=.5f112decda2b](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/im-a-scientist-the-trump-administration-reassigned-me-for-speaking-up-about-climate-change/2017/07/19/389b8dce-6b12-11e7-9c15-177740635e83_story.html?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.5f112decda2b)

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Kuae Mattox



Kuae Mattox



***Editorial Producer***

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**To:** Bickford, Ana[Ana.Bickford@turner.com]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T09:04:48-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: CNNi interview today - request for DOI statement - on deadline  
**Received:** 2017-07-26T09:05:41-04:00

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On Wed, Jul 26, 2017 at 8:58 AM, 'Bickford, Ana' via Interior Press  
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Greetings...

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Many thanks,

Ana

Ana Cohen Bickford  
Sr. Editorial Producer  
*AMANPOUR* on CNNi  
[ana.bickford@turner.com](mailto:ana.bickford@turner.com)  
O: +12122757551

M: +16463065684

[www.amanpour.com](http://www.amanpour.com)

**To:** Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** 'Bickford, Ana' via Interior Press  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T09:11:43-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** RE: CNNi interview today - request for DOI statement - on deadline  
**Received:** 2017-07-26T09:11:51-04:00

Many thanks for your prompt response.

Best

Ana

**From:** Swift, Heather [mailto:heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 26, 2017 9:05 AM  
**To:** Bickford, Ana <Ana.Bickford@turner.com>  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov  
**Subject:** Re: CNNi interview today - request for DOI statement - on deadline

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**From:** 'Mattox, Kuae' via Interior Press  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T09:35:57-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT: CNN/NEW DAY re: Joel Clement for tomorrow, July 26  
**Received:** 2017-07-26T09:36:11-04:00

Good Morning Heather,

Thanks for getting back to us and sincere apologies for reaching out so late. We will do our best to reach out earlier next time.

Kuae

Sent from my iPhone

**Kuae Mattox**

**Editorial Producer**

**CNN New Day**

One Time Warner Center

4<sup>th</sup> Floor

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(212)275-8158 (direct)

(646) 592-3183 (cell)

(212)275-7850 (main)

Kuae.mattox@turner.com

@KuaeCNN



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<image001.png> 

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**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T14:37:19-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: PBS NewsHour Request for Statement  
**Received:** 2017-07-26T14:38:06-04:00

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**From:** Murrey Jacobson  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T14:45:07-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: PBS NewsHour Request for Statement  
**Received:** 2017-07-26T14:45:15-04:00

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Also, I know the Secretary has been out and about touring. I'd like to see if we can sit down with him this summer when he gets back. Should I send the formal request to you, Heather?

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**To:** Laura Rigas[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Russell Newell[russell\_newell@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Johnson, Treci  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T14:47:37-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Climate Change Conference  
**Received:** 2017-07-26T14:47:46-04:00

Good Afternoon,

As I discussed during today's meeting, Joel Clement will be a panelist in an upcoming climate change conference. I don't have the conference details, but I wanted to give you a heads up.

Thanks,

Treci Johnson  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Office of Natural Resources Revenue  
202-513-0611 (Office)  
[Treci.Johnson@onrr.gov](mailto:Treci.Johnson@onrr.gov)

**To:** Murrey Jacobson[MJacobson@newshour.org]  
**From:** Heather Swift  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T14:49:52-04:00  
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**Subject:** Re: PBS NewsHour Request for Statement  
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Well we would very much like to do so when he can, of course.

Is there a time when I could stop by, introduce myself to you and the new team at Interior?

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Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

On Wed, Jul 26, 2017 at 2:01 PM, Murrey Jacobson <[MJacobson@newshour.org](mailto:MJacobson@newshour.org)> wrote:

Hi Heather and All,

I am writing to see if we could get a statement from the Department of Interior related to a segment we are working on today about Joel Clement and some of the allegations he has made about his change at the Department -- as well as questions raised by a number of senators in response to this and other stories.

A few questions we would like to get a response on:

-- What does Department of Interior say about Clement's allegation that he was shifted because of his work on climate change? He wrote and has said several times that he believes he was retaliated for speaking out publicly about the dangers of climate change. He has also said that even moving folks like himself around to essentially thin out the workforce is against the law.

-- Eight Democratic senators are asking the DOI Inspector General to investigate Clement's charges and similar questions about reassigning senior career officials. You response to that concern?

-- The Union of Concerned Scientists recently put out a report that said the Administration is making various moves, including at the Department of Interior, to essentially sideline independent scientific advisors as well as meetings and alter scientific content on websites. What is the Department's response?

Thanks very much,

Murrey Jacobson

Senior Producer, National Affairs

PBS NewsHour

[MJacobson@newshour.org](mailto:MJacobson@newshour.org)

**To:** Johnson, Treci[treci.johnson@onrr.gov]  
**Cc:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Russell Newell[russell\_newell@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Laura Rigas  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T15:03:00-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Climate Change Conference  
**Received:** 2017-07-26T15:03:07-04:00

Thx for the heads up. Who is the host? Topics? Any background would be great.

Laura Keehner Rigas  
Communications Director  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
(202) 897-7022 cell  
@Interior

On Jul 26, 2017, at 11:47 AM, Johnson, Treci <[treci.johnson@onrr.gov](mailto:treci.johnson@onrr.gov)> wrote:

Good Afternoon,  
As I discussed during today's meeting, Joel Clement will be a panelist in an upcoming climate change conference. I don't have the conference details, but I wanted to give you a heads up.

Thanks,

Treci Johnson  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Office of Natural Resources Revenue  
202-513-0611 (Office)  
[Treci.Johnson@onrr.gov](mailto:Treci.Johnson@onrr.gov)

**To:** Laura Rigas[laura\_rigas@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Russell Newell[russell\_newell@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Johnson, Treci  
**Sent:** 2017-07-26T15:05:23-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Climate Change Conference  
**Received:** 2017-07-26T15:05:28-04:00

I'm trying to get more information. Unfortunately, I only know because the ethics office had to approve the appearance. I've been searching the web--I'll let you know when I find something.

Treci Johnson  
Public Affairs Specialist  
Office of Natural Resources Revenue  
202-513-0611 (Office)  
[Treci.Johnson@onrr.gov](mailto:Treci.Johnson@onrr.gov)

On Wed, Jul 26, 2017 at 3:03 PM, Laura Rigas <[laura\\_rigas@ios.doi.gov](mailto:laura_rigas@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

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Public Affairs Specialist  
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**To:** heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro Energy  
**Sent:** 2017-08-01T05:42:49-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Morning Energy: EPA to get earful on corn ethanol — Court orders EPA to reinstate methane rule immediately — Trump finding tough balance on coal, nuclear — Mnuchin won't rule out blocking Venezuelan oil imports  
**Received:** 2017-08-01T05:43:08-04:00

By Alex Guillén | 08/01/2017 05:40 AM EDT

*With help from Eric Wolff, Doug Palmer, Annie Snider and Esther Whieldon*

**RFS HEARING WILL BE POPPING LIKE CORN:** EPA is throwing its annual Renewable Fuel Standard bash today, an all-day hearing for the agency to get feedback on its proposed rule that will set the amount of biofuel that must be blended into the nation's fuel supply. The agency kept the ethanol mandate at the legal maximum of 15 billion gallons, but it dramatically cut the amount of advanced biofuels, and it will surely get an earful on that.

**A-listers of biofuels:** EPA will hear from Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds and Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts, Chris Bliley of Growth Energy, Bob Dinneen of the Renewable Fuels Association, Frank Macchiarola of the American Petroleum Institute, and Donnell Rehagen of the National Biodiesel Board. Reynolds, whose state leads the nation in ethanol production, will tell EPA she's glad they're on track for an on-time rule (they're actually a bit behind schedule). But "I urge the EPA to raise the advanced biofuel, biodiesel and cellulosic volumes. The RFS is a bold policy, and Iowans and the industry as a whole have always risen to the challenge," she plans to add.

**If you go:** L'affaire du RFS will be at the Hyatt Regency Washington, 400 New Jersey Avenue NW. It will start at 9 a.m. and end when everyone who wants to has had their say.

**COURT REVIVES EPA METHANE RULE, AGAIN:** The full D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals on Monday ordered EPA to resume enforcing its methane rule for new oil and gas wells, a potentially temporary but important loss for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's deregulatory agenda. A three judge panel reversed Pruitt's stay, but gave EPA time to appeal. The agency hasn't done so, but industry groups have. The court's order was issued by a 9-2 vote. Judges Janice Rogers Brown, who will retire from the court effective Aug. 31, and Brett Kavanaugh voted against reinstating the rule immediately. More here.

**For those keeping track at home:** EPA's methane rule has been on, off, on again, off again, and now back on again. Plus, it's likely to be off again within a couple months, once Pruitt's proposed two-year hold is finalized — and then possibly back on following a new judicial review.

**TRUMP STRUGGLES TO BOOST BOTH COAL, NUCLEAR:** President Donald Trump has promised to revive the nuclear industry and put more coal miners back to work, but he is already finding it difficult to do both at the same time. Dueling announcements on Monday illustrated how difficult it will be for the Trump administration to square its support for nuclear

power — whose main attribute is its ability to deliver reliable, carbon-free electricity — with its position that reducing carbon emissions are no longer a priority for the federal government. A pair of South Carolina utilities said Monday that they would be pulling the plug on two unfinished new nuclear reactors; Santee Cooper, one of the companies, pointed out that "the current political landscape has reduced the urgency for emissions-free base load generation" among the reasons for the decision. That announcement came just a few hours after Trump Cabinet members trumpeted newly announced exports from a Pennsylvania coal mine to Ukraine, a deal the administration said it helped to negotiate. Darius Dixon [explains it all](#).

**HAPPY TUESDAY AND WELCOME TO AUGUST.** I'm your special guest host Alex Guillén. The NRDC's Joan Matthews was first to correctly name all five former presidents who were the same height as Trump (6 feet, 2 inches): George Washington, Chester A. Arthur, Franklin D. Roosevelt, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton. For today: How many presidents were born in August, and how many have died in August? Sadly, my time as guest ME host was even shorter than Anthony Scaramucci's time as White House communications director, so please welcome your guest host for the rest of the week, Annie Snider. Send your tips, energy gossip and comments to [asnider@politico.com](mailto:asnider@politico.com). Or follow us on Twitter [@AnnElizabeth18](#), [@AnthonyAdragna](#), [@Morning\\_Energy](#) and [@POLITICOPro](#).

**MNUCHIN WON'T RULE OUT BLOCKING VENEZUELAN OIL IMPORTS:** After taking the dramatic step Monday of [slapping sanctions](#) on Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, the Trump administration kept open the possibility of also shutting down oil trade with the South American country to punish Maduro's government. The U.S. "will continue to monitor the situation and consider additional sanctions," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said told reporters at a White House briefing Monday, one day after what U.S. officials called a sham election to give the Venezuelan government sweeping new powers.

**The United States imports about 700,000 to 800,000 barrels per day** of Venezuelan heavy crude oil to refineries in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. It also exports about 30,000 barrels per day of oil to Venezuela for blending with the heavier product. Mnuchin deflected questions on whether the Trump administration could impose an embargo on oil imports from Venezuela or shut down U.S. oil exports to the country. "This president is not going to advertise what he's going to do in the future. So, all options are on the table and we will consider everything," Mnuchin said.

**BERNHARDT STARTS AT INTERIOR TODAY:** Today is former lobbyist David Bernhardt's first day as Interior Deputy Secretary. Bernhardt had worked at Interior in several roles, including solicitor, during the George W. Bush administration and was a lobbyist for Westlands Water District.

**TRUMP PICKS HEALTH COMPANY LAWYER FOR KEY INTERIOR POST:** President Donald Trump plans to nominate Ryan Nelson to be the Interior Department's solicitor, its top lawyer and third in command. Nelson since 2009 has been general counsel for Idaho-based Melaleuca, an online "wellness shopping club." Nelson previous was the deputy assistant attorney general for the Environment and Natural Resources Division and a lawyer at the Office of Management and Budget. Melaleuca CEO Frank VanderSloot is a noted GOP donor who at first clashed with Trump on the campaign trail (even garnering a [scornful tweet](#) when he initially

backed Marco Rubio) before backing Trump after he secured the GOP nomination. Donald Trump Jr., who has shown influence over and interest in Interior nominees, then visited the company last September.

**Trump will also nominate John Henderson** to be assistant secretary of the Air Force for installations, environment and energy, the White House said. Henderson previously commanded the Army Corps of Engineers' Omaha district, where he oversaw work related to the Dakota Access pipeline — and recommended its approval under the Obama administration.

**API: BORDER TAX, SHMORDER TAX, AS LONG AS WE PROMOTE GROWTH:** API CEO Jack Gerard told ME Monday he was pleased Republicans in Congress and the White House had agreed to drop a border adjustment tax from plans to rewrite the tax code. He instead wants tax writers to give oil and gas companies the means to recoup their investments quicker with tools like accelerated depreciation. "We're encouraged they listen to the public and the consumers, leaving behind the border adjustment tax," he said. Gerard believes a pro-growth tax policy would replace the lost income from the proposed BAT. "The best tax policy is a job creation policy. If you want to grow taxes, you want people who are in a position to pay taxes." Gerard was touting a report sponsored by API that showed the oil and gas industry supported millions of jobs and added billions of dollars to the economy.

**KOCH BACKS PRO-MORRISEY SUPER PAC IN WEST VIRGINIA:** Koch Industries has been a major early contributor to a super PAC supporting West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey's campaign to challenge Sen. Joe Manchin. The group, 35th PAC, which was formed to boost Morrisey against his key Republican opponent, Rep. Evan Jenkins, reported to the FEC Monday that \$10,000 of the \$20,500 it raised as of the end of June came from Koch Industries. Koch is a contributor to the Republican Attorneys General Association, where Morrisey is currently chairman, and Morrisey is one of the most frequent challengers of Obama-era environmental regulations. Morrisey's actual campaign was only formed a couple of weeks ago and hasn't filed any FEC reports yet. Jenkins' campaign, meanwhile, has about \$1.2 million thanks to his previously existing House campaign chest and more than \$680,000 in donations this year.

**CONTENTIOUS ASIAN CARP STUDY COMING NEXT WEEK:** The Army Corps of Engineers has alerted lawmakers it will release a draft plan for halting the spread of dangerous Asian carp into the Great Lakes on Aug. 7. The study was originally due out Feb. 28, but was put on hold by the Trump administration amid concerns from the barge industry that it could hamper navigation between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River. Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers have been pushing for the study's swift release, through methods including policy riders inserted in pending appropriations measures.

**THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS THRICE:** Letters from ME's mailbag.

**FERC quorum:** The Electric Reliability Coordinating Council would very much like the Senate to approve the nominations of Robert Powelson and Neil Chatterjee to seats on FERC to get the commission back to a quorum. The group says \$50 billion in capital is "hamstrung" in projects requiring FERC approval, with another \$25 billion starting applications. "Every week's delay compounds the problem as seasonal windows for pipeline analyses close and potential for energy

price spikes increase," wrote ERCC Director Scott Segal.

**'Red team' climate science review:** The American Association for the Advancement of Science and 15 other science groups have asked for a meeting with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to talk over his forthcoming "red team" climate science review program. The existing peer review system is already "a multi-dimensional, competitive "red team/blue team" process whereby scientists and scientific teams are constantly challenging one another's findings for robustness," they write.

**Monuments:** The Northwest Guides and Anglers Association wants Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke to leave the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Oregon and California intact.

**GROUP LAUNCHES ZINKE-TARGETED ADS:** The watchdog group Center for Western Priorities is launching a six-figure ad buy today pressuring Zinke against shrinking or revoking any national monuments. The spot will air in Washington starting today, with an online campaign running through the month.

**Another watchdog group, the Western Values Project,** will launch a website today cataloguing "the revolving door between special interest lobbyists and political appointees at the Department of the Interior." WVP's "Department of Influence" site has found 21 political appointees with backgrounds in oil, gas, coal or another resource extraction industry and three with conservation or recreational backgrounds. A dozen served in the Trump campaign.

**INTERIOR SAW 79 NEW EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS:** The Interior Department on Monday posted its fiscal 2017 third quarter report on employee and job applicant discrimination complaints. In the last quarter, during which Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke was in office, the agency received 79 new complaints, 58 percent of which involved retaliation allegations. A former Interior senior staffer filed a whistleblower retaliation complaint earlier this month. The agency has received 260 discrimination complaints thus far this fiscal year. The numbers are largely in line with the data from the past five fiscal years.

**ENVIRO ATTORNEY RUBIN DIES:** Noted Washington energy attorney Jim Rubin died Friday just weeks after being diagnosed with cancer, reports Greenwire. Rubin spent almost 15 years at DOJ working on environmental trial issues and on a Clinton-era climate change task force. He spent the last decade at several D.C. law firms, most recently Dorsey & Whitney.

**LOS ANGELES OLYMPICS PUT PRESSURE ON CITY POLLUTION:** Los Angeles reached a deal with the IOC to host the 2028 Summer Olympics, giving the city about a decade to work on its historically high levels of smog and other pollution the world's athletes will be sucking into their lungs. The American Lung Association says Los Angeles has the worst smog pollution of any U.S. city, and despite significant strides in recent years, the area has a long way to go, ALA's Bonnie Holmes-Gen told ME. "In some parts of LA, we have over 140 bad air days every year," she said. "The good news is there are a lot of important initiatives underway. But the state of California and the South Coast air district need to step up the work to move away from polluting fossil fuels, which is the No. 1 cause of pollution in the LA region."

Smog-choked cities have hosted Olympics before — Beijing in 2008, for example. But China resorted to some serious steps to clear the skies for the games, including shutting down factories



and construction projects and limiting car usage, none of which would likely go over well in La La Land. That may help temporarily, but Los Angeles' smog chronically plagues millions of residents. Coincidentally, Beijing organizers learned some of their smog reduction techniques from the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, when car-crazy L.A. implemented new vehicle restrictions and longtime residents were astounded to see haze clear and reveal mountain ranges.

**MOVER, SHAKER:** Vince Griffin is the new executive director of Indiana Advanced Energy Economy, the state branch of the national group with a similar name that promotes renewables and other advanced energy technologies. Griffin retired last year from the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, where he was vice president of energy and environmental policy.

**Morning read:** FERC has issued new guidelines for "reporting on culture resources investigations for natural gas projects," for compliance with laws protecting historic and preserved sites.

## QUICK HITS

- Billionaire Behind the Dakota Access Is 'Baffled' by Complaints About His New Pipeline. Bloomberg
- Californians urged to save energy during solar eclipse. Fox News
- Alphabet Wants to Fix Renewable Energy's Storage Problem — With Salt. Bloomberg
- Devon Energy sells shale oil assets in Texas. USA Today
- Big Oil weighs in on Texas 'bathroom bill,' warning it will threaten state's economy. Los Angeles Times
- Suicides of nearly 60,000 Indian farmers linked to climate change, study claims. Guardian

## HAPPENING TODAY

9 a.m. — EPA holds a public hearing on the RFS at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, 400 New Jersey Avenue NW.

10 a.m. — "Oversight of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund Program," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Dirksen 406.

## THAT'S ALL FOR ME.

*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/08/epa-to-get-earful-on-corn-ethanol-024011>

Stories from POLITICO Pro

D.C. Circuit orders EPA to resume enforcing methane rule [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 07/31/2017 06:39 PM EDT

The full D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals today ordered EPA to resume enforcing its methane rule for new oil and gas wells, a potentially temporary but important loss for EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt's deregulatory agenda.

A three-judge panel ruled on July 3 that Pruitt improperly imposed a 90-day stay of the rule amid a reconsideration of key leak detection and repair requirements.

The court agreed to keep the stay in place for two weeks to give EPA time to decide on an appeal, a timeline that expired last week. The agency has not asked for an appeal, but industry groups and states critical of rule have. The court ordered responses to those appeal petitions be turned in by Wednesday afternoon, with any further reply due Thursday, indicating the court will move quickly on the appeal.

The order was issued by a 9-2 vote. Judges Janice Rogers Brown, who will retire from the court effective Aug. 31, and Brett Kavanaugh voted against reinstating the rule immediately.

EPA is taking comment through Aug. 9 on a proposed two-year stay of the rule through 2019 and could have it in place by September. That longer-term stay may not face the same legal issues as the 90-day one since EPA will incorporate public comment.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** The court could decide as early as this week whether to hear an en banc appeal. Pruitt's 90-day stay would expire on Aug. 31 anyway, putting a ticking clock on the court proceedings before the matter becomes moot.

*To view online [click here](#).*

[Back](#)

**Trump's coal-boosting eats away at the case for nuclear** [Back](#)

By Darius Dixon | 07/31/2017 08:30 PM EDT

President Donald Trump has promised to revive the nuclear industry and put more coal miners back to work, but he is already finding it difficult to do both at the same time.

Dueling announcements out of South Carolina and Pennsylvania illustrated how difficult it will be for the Trump administration to square its support for nuclear power — whose main attribute is its ability to deliver reliable, carbon-free electricity — with its position that reducing carbon emissions is no longer a priority for the federal government.

Utilities in South Carolina said Monday they would stop construction on two new nuclear reactors at the V.C. Summer nuclear plant, about nine years after they launched the project. The announcement came a few hours after the Energy and Commerce departments trumpeted an agreement for a Pennsylvania-based company to sell U.S. coal to a Ukrainian utility. But analysts say there is little surprise that coal is thriving while nuclear continues to struggle, thanks to Trump's decision to abandon the Paris climate deal and unwind virtually all of the regulations

former President Barack Obama put in place to bring down U.S. carbon emissions in line with that target.

In his June speech at the Energy Department outlining an "energy dominance" agenda, Trump said his administration would launch a "complete review" of U.S. nuclear policy in order to revive the industry, although it is unclear what progress has been made since then. Energy Secretary Rick Perry said a few weeks later that he had not seen any details of that work, nor a parallel review of grid reliability that may be beneficial for nuclear power. At the same DOE speech, Trump announced plans to lower barriers for overseas coal financing and pointed to Ukraine as an eager customer for U.S. coal exports.

"If the general approach to energy policy from Trump and the gang is going to be that 'we're okay with coal, we're okay with carbon,' then that's one significant reason less [for the private sector] to want to take a chance with other issues on a nuclear plant," said Kit Konolige, a senior utilities analyst with Bloomberg Intelligence.

SCANA, the majority owner of the unfinished South Carolina reactors, cited a long list of reasons for not finishing the Westinghouse-designed AP1000 units: cost concerns about the already over-budget project, "uncertainty" about getting an extension of nuclear production tax credits from Capitol Hill, and the decision by co-owner Santee Cooper, a state-owned electric utility, to walk away from the project. Of course, cheap natural gas, construction delays, weak electricity demand and the bankruptcy of primary contractor Westinghouse didn't help, but the companies indicted that the change in attitude coming from the White House was a factor as well.

"Today, the business climate has changed considerably," Santee Cooper said in its own announcement that its board of directors sought to stop the project, referencing Obama's emphasis on climate change, the lingering effects of the most recent recession, and energy efficiency programs. "Natural gas prices plummeted after fracking began, and the current political landscape has reduced the urgency for emissions-free base load generation."

Investors rewarded the decision. SCANA's stock closed 5 percent higher than it opened Monday after it announced its plans to abandon the Summer project.

The South Carolina closures send a worrying signal for the fate of the two Westinghouse reactors under construction as part of the Vogtle nuclear expansion, a project similar to Summer being run by Southern Co., Oglethorpe Power Corp. and the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia.

"I think Southern's gonna go the same way that SCANA is going," Konolige said. "I think, basically, the reasons are pretty much the same: The uncertainty of where policy wants you to put your money and of how long it's going to take to get this thing done — which is going to be a long time — and then they're going to look at the fact that SCANA's stock went up [Monday]."

But Georgia regulators are trying to tamp down any effort to compare the two situations.

"The dissimilarities of these projects should be recognized before making any suppositions on whether construction will continue at Plant Vogtle based on decisions made in South Carolina,"

Georgia Public Service Commission Chairman Stan Wise said in a [statement](#).

Rich Powell, executive director for ClearPath, a conservative group concerned about climate change, said nuclear becomes increasingly competitive the bigger the emissions cut regulators and legislators aim for, but he argued that Obama's Clean Power Plan was weak for nuclear.

"There's been no indication so far that our policymakers are optimizing for getting our grid to zero emissions," he said. "That's where nuclear gets really valuable. Nuclear's expensive if you're trying to reduce emissions by 30 percent or 40 percent."

He added: "There hasn't been a clear line of support for zero-emissions baseload."

An Energy Department spokeswoman disputed the notion that the administration is not doing enough to help the nuclear industry.

"Secretary Perry shares President Trump's belief that an 'all of the above' energy strategy is what will help America become Energy Dominant," DOE spokesperson Shaylyn Hynes said in an email. "As we look to the future, nuclear power with its zero emissions and around the clock reliability should be a larger part of our nation's energy portfolio."

*To view online [click here](#).*

[Back](#)

### **Treasury sanctions Venezuela's president [Back](#)**

By Zachary Warmbrodt | 07/31/2017 03:44 PM EDT

The U.S. Treasury Department is targeting Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro with sanctions, accusing him of widespread human rights abuses.

Treasury announced the sanctions following the election on Sunday of an assembly to rewrite the Latin American country's constitution.

In a statement, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin called the vote "illegitimate" and said it confirmed that Maduro was "a dictator who disregards the will of the Venezuelan people."

Maduro joins Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, Syrian President Bashar Assad and North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong Un as a head of state personally sanctioned by the U.S.

"By sanctioning Maduro, the United States makes clear our opposition to the policies of his regime and our support for the people of Venezuela who seek to return their country to a full and prosperous democracy," Mnuchin said.

Treasury said in a release that all of Maduro's assets subject to U.S. jurisdiction were frozen and that U.S. persons were prohibited from dealing with him.

Mnuchin warned that anyone who participates in the assembly that was the subject of Sunday's election "could be exposed to future U.S. sanctions."

He declined to comment on any further steps the U.S. government might take.

The move comes on the heels of President Donald Trump's reluctant agreement to sign a legislative package overwhelmingly passed by the Senate last week, consisting of sanctions on Russia, Iran and North Korea, constraining his bid to defrost relations with Moscow.

*Victoria Guida contributed to this report.*

*To view online [click here](#).*

[Back](#)

### **Trump's Interior pick lifts outdoors groups** [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon and Annie Snider | 12/15/2016 05:00 AM EDT

President-elect Donald Trump's selection of freshman Montana Rep. [Ryan Zinke](#) as Interior secretary is a sign that hunting and fishing groups may still wield clout in a Trump administration loaded with oil and gas executives — and in a Republican Party split between its Theodore Roosevelt and shrink-the-government wings.

Influencing Trump's choice for the post was the top priority for sportsmen's groups, which had two main criteria for any candidate: The new Interior secretary had to be a hunter or angler, and someone committed to keeping public lands public.

They said Zinke, a Republican and former Navy SEAL commander, fit the bill on both counts — in contrast with Rep. [Cathy McMorris Rodgers](#) (R-Wash.), who has co-sponsored [legislation](#) that would have forced the sale of millions of acres of federal land.

McMorris Rodgers appeared to be the front-runner for the post last week. But the outdoors groups voiced their qualms about her to Donald Trump Jr., an avid hunter and member of the group Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, when he asked for their opinions, sources close to the discussions say.

While the groups can't claim all the credit for McMorris Rodgers' fall from grace, they said Zinke's nomination — officially announced Thursday — gives them reason to hope the new president will hear their voice. Other potential candidates that sportsmen groups had supported included Wyoming Gov. Matt Mead and Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval.

"There was some negative reaction to some of the names that were put forward and those comments were shared all the way to the very, very top," said Collin O'Mara, CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. He added: "We're not going to win on every issue, but I think we'll have the ability to make our case. And at this point, that's all we can ask for."

Conservationists also hope Zinke will serve as a counterbalance to other Trump Cabinet picks, including Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson as secretary of state and Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt as head of the EPA, whose selections have raised fears that the decks are being stacked in favor of the oil and gas industry.

"This looks to me like a cabinet that's shaping up to be filled with special interests ... especially from the fossil fuel energy kind of side," said Peter Aengst, senior director of the Northern Rockies region for The Wilderness Society. "The hope here is that Zinke will be an important check on some really concerning other Cabinet picks."

Aengst said he also drew some hope from the fact that Zinke has opposed efforts by other Republicans in Congress, including House Natural Resources Chairman [Rob Bishop](#), to transfer vast stretches of federal land to the states. "What would give me much more hope is if I could point to specific examples where he's also gone up against fossil fuel special interests," Aengst said.

Zinke's selection could also help Democrats keep the Senate seat held by [Jon Tester](#) — whose supporters include Backcountry Hunters and Anglers leader Land Tawney — by keeping Zinke from challenging him in 2018. But Tawney [told](#) POLITICO this week that his support for Tester played no role in his group's decision to praise Zinke as a contender for Interior.

Zinke accepted Trump's nomination Thursday while invoking the name of the conservation movement's favorite Republican president.

"As inscribed in the stone archway of Yellowstone National Park in Gardiner, Mont., I shall faithfully uphold Teddy Roosevelt's belief that our treasured public lands are 'for the benefit and enjoyment of the people,'" Zinke said in a statement released by Trump's transition. "I will work tirelessly to ensure our public lands are managed and preserved in a way that benefits everyone for generations to come."

Those words offered a contrast with years of conservative attacks on pieces of Roosevelt's legacy, including efforts by Republicans to loosen the power that Interior holds over Western states as the owner of one-third of all U.S. land. The Heritage Foundation [has urged](#) Trump's administration to hand states the responsibility for all leasing and permitting of federal lands within their borders, while Texas Sen. [Ted Cruz](#) made [similar promises](#) during this year's Republican presidential primaries.

But Trump disagreed with that anti-Washington fervor during the campaign, [telling](#) Field & Stream magazine that he would not support proposals to divest federal lands to the states.

"I don't like the idea because I want to keep the lands great, and you don't know what the state is going to do," the New York billionaire said in January. "I mean, are they going to sell if they get into a little bit of trouble? And I don't think it's something that should be sold. We have to be great stewards of this land. This is magnificent land."

Conservationists, who want to ensure that people have access to public land for fishing, hunting and recreation, see Zinke as someone who shares their values and isn't afraid to stand his ground.

Besides bucking Bishop's efforts to transfer federal lands to the states, Zinke resigned as a delegate to last summer's Republican National Convention because the party's platform included language calling for the sale of public lands. Zinke was also the lone Republican on Bishop's committee to join with Democrats last year in trying to permanently authorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a 51-year-old pot of federal money that Bishop opposes renewing

without major changes.

"He's definitely one who's not afraid — just look at his military background," said Steve Moyer of the group Trout Unlimited.

Hunting and fishing groups have raised concerns with some aspects of Zinke's record, however, and other environmental organizations are hardly sold on him. Defenders of Wildlife President CEO Jamie Rappaport called him "unsuitable for the job" because of votes he cast against Endangered Species Act protections for individual species and his support for fossil fuel development.

"Other than supporting the Land and Water Conservation Fund, we struggle to find something positive," Rappaport said in an interview.

Moreover, Zinke is firmly anti-regulation, voting the Republican line in opposition to the Environmental Protection Agency's Waters of the U.S. rule — an Obama administration effort that Trout Unlimited and the National Wildlife Federation strongly backed — as well the EPA's climate regulations for power plants. The League of Conservation Voters gave him a lifetime score of 3 percent on environmental issues.

Zinke has also backed legislation to rip up the Obama administration's plans for protecting the greater sage grouse, an imperiled bird that dwells on prime oil and gas land in the West. And he has criticized Interior's overhaul of the royalty and valuation process for fossil fuels on federal lands and co-sponsored a [bill](#) that would sunset the agency's moratorium on new coal leases in 2019.

Endangered Species Act issues are likely to be front and center in Congress next year, especially as Bishop angles for major changes to the bedrock law. That makes some of the groups that most frequently litigate on endangered issues nervous.

Zinke has "voted for legislation to remove grizzly bears from the endangered species list, wolves, lynx, he's fought protection for the sage grouse and at every turn and he wanted to exempt big water developers ... in California from the Endangered Species Act," said Kieran Suckling, executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity, a green group that frequently sues Interior over its species protections.

But sportsmen's groups hope that with Zinke at the table, the conversation will be more constructive than it would otherwise be with a Republican-controlled Congress and White House.

"He's not somebody saying we should eliminate the act or not care about the species," said the wildlife federation's O'Mara. He said he hopes Zinke can shift the conversation away from controversies about adding species to the endangered list, and focus instead more on how to manage them better.

Zinke could help cut through some of the politics around the 1973 law, said David Allen, CEO of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

"The Endangered Species Act has been hijacked and has gone way beyond what it was ever intended [to do] when it was introduced during [President Richard] Nixon's time," Allen said, arguing that he hopes Zinke can make the act a "conservation tool and less of a political tool."

*To view online [click here](#).*

[Back](#)

## **Donald Trump Jr. taps hunting pal for Interior liaison [Back](#)**

By Esther Whieldon | 03/17/2017 05:01 AM EDT

Donald Trump Jr. is still exerting influence at the Interior Department and has tapped a hunting buddy to serve as a go-between for the agency, sportmen's groups and his father's White House.

President Donald Trump's eldest son is an avid hunter and played a key role in picking Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, who is also a hunter and fisherman. And now Donald Trump Jr. has asked Jason Hairston, a former San Francisco 49ers linebacker and founder of hunting gear company Kuui, to serve as a liaison among himself, Zinke, sportmen's groups and the White House on conservation and public lands issues, Hairston said on Thursday.

"I'm absolutely going to take the position," Hairston told POLITICO, but the job won't come with a salary, and he plans on staying in California where he lives and manages his business.

But an official with the Interior Department said there had "been no discussion of creating of a new role like this" and White House deputy press secretary Stephanie Grisham said in an email there were no new personnel announcements.

Hairston said Donald Trump Jr. had hoped to play the liaison role between Interior and the White House himself, but his decision to stick with running his father's business empire with his brother, Eric Trump, put a kink in that plan.

"It's really a role he was hoping to fill, but he can't because of conflict of interest," Hairston said.

Hairston and Donald Trump Jr. have been hunting buddies for at least two years — and Donald Trump Jr. [tweeted](#) out his congratulations last year after Hairston's company was featured in a [Bloomberg news](#) article. The two have tracked game together in mountain ranges in the West and Canada, and Hairston helped to organize meetings between sportsman groups and Donald Trump during his campaign, including a February 2016 gathering in Las Vegas, Hairston said.

The president "knows that it's not just a sport, that it really is something that's more meaningful to hunters and how important wildlife and conservation are because of everything Don and Eric have experienced and shared with him," Hairston said. "So he's not just pacifying his kids over this. He understands it and gets it."

Outdoor recreation groups have recently stepped up their fight against efforts by some Western Republican lawmakers to force the Interior Department to transfer more of the vast amounts of public lands it controls in the West to states — a move the groups say would cut them off from



prime hunting and fishing ground. And having Hairston as their advocate would give them a direct line to the White House.

While he said his position hasn't been given a formal starting day, Hairston said he has "already started with the work on it," including "meeting with different organizations to determine what challenges and issues we're facing and really just what we should be working on — what's important."

Hairston has met with Zinke twice: once before Zinke was confirmed as secretary and again on March 7 when Hairston traveled to Washington and talked with the heads of conservation and hunting organizations. Those included the National Rifle Association, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, National Shooting Sports Foundation and Safari Club International.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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#### **Interior official files whistleblower complaint over job reassignment [Back](#)**

By Esther Whieldon and Ben Lefebvre | 07/19/2017 07:06 PM EDT

A former senior Interior Department official has filed a whistleblower complaint after the agency transferred him from a leadership position focused on climate change to a desk job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies.

In a [complaint](#) and [disclosure](#) filing with the Office of Special Counsel and in a Washington Post [op-ed](#), former Interior Office of Policy Analysis Director Joel Clement claimed he was [reassigned](#) to a position at the Office of Natural Resources Revenue to stop him from publicly discussing climate change impacts on native Alaskan coastal communities.

Clement was among dozens of senior executive staff reassigned to other jobs in June.

Clement told POLITICO no Interior political staffers ever raised concerns about his activities prior to his reassignment. "It was kind of obvious to reassign the climate adaptation experts to the accounting office where they collect fossil fuel royalty checks. That was pretty flagrant, I would say, in terms of sending the message. So that message was received loud and clear that they wanted me to quit."

Clement said he'd like his old job back, and he hoped other staff would also complain.

Interior spokeswoman Heather Swift said the personnel moves were "conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations."

Clement may have difficulty proving his case because agencies have wide discretion to reassign staff, according to Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. "It sounds like he's being retaliated against because of his job, not because of any disclosure he made," Ruch said. "He's suffering due to the nature of his job, and maybe because he did it too well."

*Annie Snider contributed to this report.*

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[DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 8-7-17.docx](#)

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8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)  
8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)

#### Emergency Management

In Oregon, the Spruce Lake Fire in Crater Lake National Park (NPS) has burned 5,300 (+1,700) acres. The fire is 13 (+8)-percent contained and managed by a Type-2 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 332 (+135) personnel assigned, including 14 (-5) DOI personnel. There are 39 (+39) residential and 13 (+13) commercial structures threatened. The fire continues to threaten the habitat of the northern spotted owl, sensitive aquatic species, sensitive plant and animal species, and timber allotments. Lack of line management personnel and adequate air attack coverage threatens to slow fire attack operations. Full containment is now forecast for August 31 (+15).

Crater Lake National Park issued a Level 1 Evacuation Notice for Rim Village and Park Headquarters on August 5. The Level 1 Evacuation Notice informs residents and visitors to "be ready" for a potential evacuation in the event that the Spruce Lake Fire approaches these areas.

#### Outside Media of Interest

##### **Interior Won't Change Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument Designation.**

The AP (8/4, Daly) reported, "Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said Friday he is not recommending changes to Arizona's Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, the fifth site Zinke has removed from an ongoing review of national monuments for possible elimination or reduction." The AP noted, "Zinke is reviewing 27 national monuments designated by previous presidents. The review was ordered by President Donald Trump, who says many monument designations are unwarranted land grabs by the federal government. Zinke has removed five sites from review ahead of a final report due later this month. Others removed from consideration are in Montana, Colorado, Idaho and Washington state."

##### **Under Trump, Coal Mining Gets New Life On US Lands.**

A 2,700-word, front-page New York Times (8/6, A1, Lipton, Meier) report says the Trump Administration is "encouraging more coal mining on lands owned by the federal government – part of an aggressive push to both invigorate the struggling American coal industry and more

broadly exploit commercial opportunities on public lands.” The Times comments, “companies and individuals with economic interests in the lands, mining companies among them,” have not “held such a strong upper hand” since “the so-called Sagebrush Rebellion during the Reagan administration.” In late June, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “visited Whitefish, Mont., to attend a meeting of Western governors, where he vowed to find a balance between extracting commodities from federal lands and protecting them.” Zinke said in a speech, “Our greatest treasures are public lands. It is not a partisan issue. It is an American issue.” Yet, according to the Times, “The alliance between Mr. Zinke and the coal industry is well documented in his campaign finance disclosures.”

#### **The Battle Over Science In The Trump Administration.**

CNN International (8/5, Green) reported online, “President Donald Trump has made no secret of his desire to roll back environmental regulations and change the playing field for the fossil-fuel industry,” and “his administration’s actions over its first six months have followed that lead, including what many scientists say is a full-fledged battle against research and facts.” CNN cited how “Joel Clement was director of the Office of Policy Analysis at the Interior Department, until three weeks ago. Now he’s a senior adviser at the department’s Office of Natural Resources Revenue – a position he labels an accounting job.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke told Congress in June that reassignments will be part of the process meant to reduce the department’s “physical footprint.”

#### **Trump Readies Repeal Of An Obama-Era Coal Rule Right After West Virginia Rally.**

The Daily Caller (8/4) reported that the “Interior Department has filed a repeal of an Obama-era rule to raise mineral royalties on federal lands.” In a Friday regulatory filing, “officials noted the royalties rule had ‘several significant defects in the rule that would have undermined its purpose and intent’ and made it ripe for repeal.” President Trump had said at a rally Thursday night, “We are putting our coal miners back to work. We have ended the war on beautiful, clean coal. We have stopped the EPA intrusion. American coal exports are already up.”

#### **Outdoors Notebook: Survey Shows Growth In Number Of Anglers.**

The Dallas Morning News (8/5, Sasser) reported, “Americans took 855 million fishing trips last year, according to a report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Outdoor Foundation,” which “showed fishing increased by 2.5 million anglers over the previous year.” FWS survey data also showed “that the average mourning dove hunter brought home 22.2 birds during that season, and the average white-winged dove hunter bagged 14.7 birds.”

#### **Federal Register Listings**

Items cleared for the FR on Friday.

REG0007221 FWS Proposed Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Olympia subspecies of the Mazama pocket Gopher, Thurston County, Washington. The Service received an application from Mr. Steven McLain for an Incidental Take Permit covering the threatened Olympia subspecies of the Mazama pocket gopher for activities related to construction of one single-family home on land he owns in Thurston County, Washington. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007230 FWS Endangered Species; Recovery Permit Applications. This is a batched notice

announcing the receipt of applications received by FWS (Region 2) for Endangered Species Act permits. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007233 FWS Receipt of Application for Incidental Take Permit; Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for BAE Hollister Test Facility, San Benito County, California. The Service received an application from BAE Systems Land and Armament L.P. for an Incidental Take Permit covering the federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox and the threatened California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander for soil remediation activities. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007234 FWS Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Morro Shoulderband Snail; Rothman Parcel, Community of Los Osos, San Luis Obispo County, California. The Service received an application from Robin and Linda Rothman for an Incidental Take Permit covering the federally-listed endangered Morro shoulderband snail due to construction of a single-family residence. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007235 FWS Foreign Endangered and Threatened Species; Receipt of Applications for Permit. This is a batched notice announcing the receipt of applications received by FWS for Endangered Species Act permits and Marine Mammal Protection Act permits. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007246 FWS Notice of Public Meeting: Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council. The Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, August 30, 2017. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007247 FWS 6-Month Extension of Final Determination on the Proposed Endangered Status for Texas Hornshell. The Texas hornshell is a freshwater mussel in New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico that was proposed as an endangered species on August 10, 2016. We are taking this action to extend the final determination based on substantial disagreement regarding the status of Texas hornshell in Mexico. Proposed Rule 08/04/2017.

Doug Domenech  
Senior Advisor  
US Department of the Interior

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9/5 - National Association of State Park Directors and Annual Meeting (Missoula, Montana)

8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)

8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)

8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)

### **Emergency Management**

In Oregon, the Spruce Lake Fire in Crater Lake National Park (NPS) has burned 5,300 (+1,700) acres. The fire is 13 (+8)-percent contained and managed by a Type-2 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 332 (+135) personnel assigned, including 14 (-5) DOI personnel. There are 39 (+39) residential and 13 (+13) commercial structures threatened. The fire continues to threaten the habitat of the northern spotted owl, sensitive aquatic species, sensitive plant and animal species, and timber allotments. Lack of line management personnel and adequate air attack coverage threatens to slow fire attack operations. Full containment is now forecast for August 31 (+15).

Crater Lake National Park issued a Level 1 Evacuation Notice for Rim Village and Park Headquarters on August 5. The Level 1 Evacuation Notice informs residents and visitors to "be ready" for a potential evacuation in the event that the Spruce Lake Fire approaches these areas.

### **Outside Media of Interest**

#### **Interior Won't Change Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument Designation.**

The AP (8/4, Daly) reported, "Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke said Friday he is not recommending changes to Arizona's Grand Canyon-Parashant National Monument, the fifth site Zinke has removed from an ongoing review of national monuments for possible elimination or reduction." The AP noted, "Zinke is reviewing 27 national monuments designated by previous presidents. The review was ordered by President Donald Trump, who says many monument designations are unwarranted land grabs by the federal government. Zinke has removed five sites from review ahead of a final report due later this month. Others removed from consideration are in Montana, Colorado, Idaho and Washington state."

#### **Under Trump, Coal Mining Gets New Life On US Lands.**

A 2,700-word, front-page New York Times (8/6, A1, Lipton, Meier) report says the Trump Administration is “encouraging more coal mining on lands owned by the federal government – part of an aggressive push to both invigorate the struggling American coal industry and more broadly exploit commercial opportunities on public lands.” The Times comments, “companies and individuals with economic interests in the lands, mining companies among them,” have not “held such a strong upper hand” since “the so-called Sagebrush Rebellion during the Reagan administration.” In late June, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke “visited Whitefish, Mont., to attend a meeting of Western governors, where he vowed to find a balance between extracting commodities from federal lands and protecting them.” Zinke said in a speech, “Our greatest treasures are public lands. It is not a partisan issue. It is an American issue.” Yet, according to the Times, “The alliance between Mr. Zinke and the coal industry is well documented in his campaign finance disclosures.”

#### **The Battle Over Science In The Trump Administration.**

CNN International (8/5, Green) reported online, “President Donald Trump has made no secret of his desire to roll back environmental regulations and change the playing field for the fossil-fuel industry,” and “his administration’s actions over its first six months have followed that lead, including what many scientists say is a full-fledged battle against research and facts.” CNN cited how “Joel Clement was director of the Office of Policy Analysis at the Interior Department, until three weeks ago. Now he’s a senior adviser at the department’s Office of Natural Resources Revenue – a position he labels an accounting job.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke told Congress in June that reassignments will be part of the process meant to reduce the department’s “physical footprint.”

#### **Trump Readies Repeal Of An Obama-Era Coal Rule Right After West Virginia Rally.**

The Daily Caller (8/4) reported that the “Interior Department has filed a repeal of an Obama-era rule to raise mineral royalties on federal lands.” In a Friday regulatory filing, “officials noted the royalties rule had ‘several significant defects in the rule that would have undermined its purpose and intent’ and made it ripe for repeal.” President Trump had said at a rally Thursday night, “We are putting our coal miners back to work. We have ended the war on beautiful, clean coal. We have stopped the EPA intrusion. American coal exports are already up.”

#### **Outdoors Notebook: Survey Shows Growth In Number Of Anglers.**

The Dallas Morning News (8/5, Sasser) reported, “Americans took 855 million fishing trips last year, according to a report by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Outdoor Foundation,” which “showed fishing increased by 2.5 million anglers over the previous year.” FWS survey data also showed “that the average mourning dove hunter brought home 22.2 birds during that season, and the average white-winged dove hunter bagged 14.7 birds.”

#### **Federal Register Listings**

Items cleared for the FR on Friday.

REG0007221 FWS Proposed Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Olympia subspecies of the Mazama pocket Gopher, Thurston County, Washington. The Service received an application from Mr. Steven McLain for an Incidental Take Permit covering the threatened Olympia subspecies of the Mazama pocket gopher for activities related to construction of one single-family home on land he owns in Thurston County, Washington. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007230 FWS Endangered Species; Recovery Permit Applications. This is a batched notice announcing the receipt of applications received by FWS (Region 2) for Endangered Species Act permits. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007233 FWS Receipt of Application for Incidental Take Permit; Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for BAE Hollister Test Facility, San Benito County, California. The Service received an application from BAE Systems Land and Armament L.P. for an Incidental Take Permit covering the federally endangered San Joaquin kit fox and the threatened California red-legged frog and California tiger salamander for soil remediation activities. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007234 FWS Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Morro Shoulderband Snail; Rothman Parcel, Community of Los Osos, San Luis Obispo County, California. The Service received an application from Robin and Linda Rothman for an Incidental Take Permit covering the federally-listed endangered Morro shoulderband snail due to construction of a single-family residence. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007235 FWS Foreign Endangered and Threatened Species; Receipt of Applications for Permit. This is a batched notice announcing the receipt of applications received by FWS for Endangered Species Act permits and Marine Mammal Protection Act permits. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007246 FWS Notice of Public Meeting: Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council. The Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, August 30, 2017. Notice 08/04/2017.

REG0007247 FWS 6-Month Extension of Final Determination on the Proposed Endangered Status for Texas Hornshell. The Texas hornshell is a freshwater mussel in New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico that was proposed as an endangered species on August 10, 2016. We are taking this action to extend the final determination based on substantial disagreement regarding the status of Texas hornshell in Mexico. Proposed Rule 08/04/2017.

Doug Domenech  
Senior Advisor  
US Department of the Interior

NOTE: *Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.*

**To:** 'Swift, Heather'[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov];  
Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Rydell, Kate M.  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T10:37:13-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** FW: CBS EVENING NEWS QUERY RE JOEL CLEMENT  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T10:37:29-04:00

Heather,

The piece on Joel Clement may air tonight, so I am just circling back with you on this to see if there is any update from the DOI, or if the statement below still stands?

Thanks

Kate

---

**From:** Rydell, Kate M.  
**Sent:** Friday, July 21, 2017 6:21 PM  
**To:** 'Swift, Heather' <heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov>  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov  
**Subject:** RE: CBS EVENING NEWS QUERY RE JOEL CLEMENT

Thank you very much,

Kate

**From:** Swift, Heather [[mailto:heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 21, 2017 10:07 AM  
**To:** Rydell, Kate M. <[RydellKM@cbsnews.com](mailto:RydellKM@cbsnews.com)>  
**Cc:** [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)  
**Subject:** Re: CBS EVENING NEWS QUERY RE JOEL CLEMENT

Thank you for your interest. Please see the Department's statement below.

**Regarding the op-ed:**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

**Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and

the Department's operations.

-

Heather Swift

Department of the Interior

@DOIPressSec

Heather\_Swift@ios.doi.gov | Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov

On Fri, Jul 21, 2017 at 9:41 AM, Rydell, Kate M. <[RydellKM@cbsnews.com](mailto:RydellKM@cbsnews.com)> wrote:

Hi, I am a producer with the CBS Evening News, working on a story for tonight's newscast about Joel Clement and his recent op-ed about being re-assigned from his job at DOI. Would you be able to provide someone for us to interview about his re-assignment? Have you already issued a statement on this subject?

Thank you so much..

Kate

KATE RYDELL/PRODUCER/CBS EVENING NEWS

202 457 4385



**To:** Rydell, Kate M.[RydellKM@cbsnews.com]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T10:38:34-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: FW: CBS EVENING NEWS QUERY RE JOEL CLEMENT  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T10:39:20-04:00

Statement below still stands. Thanks.

-

Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
[@DOIPressSec](mailto:@DOIPressSec)  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

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Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

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Department of the Interior

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Thank you so much..

Kate

KATE RYDELL/PRODUCER/CBS EVENING NEWS

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**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Rydell, Kate M.  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T10:39:53-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** RE: FW: CBS EVENING NEWS QUERY RE JOEL CLEMENT  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T10:40:03-04:00

Thank you very much.  
k

**From:** Swift, Heather [mailto:heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 08, 2017 10:39 AM  
**To:** Rydell, Kate M. <RydellKM@cbsnews.com>  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov  
**Subject:** Re: FW: CBS EVENING NEWS QUERY RE JOEL CLEMENT

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Department of the Interior  
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Heather Swift

Department of the Interior

@DOIPressSec

[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

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Kate

KATE RYDELL/PRODUCER/CBS EVENING NEWS  
202 457 4385

**To:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Timothy Williams[timothy\_williams@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Holley, Amy[amy\_holley@ios.doi.gov]; Stern, Adam[adam\_stern@ios.doi.gov]; Christian Crowley[christian\_crowley@ios.doi.gov]; Ann Miller[ann\_miller@ios.doi.gov]; Shawn Buckner[shawn\_buckner@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Simon, Benjamin  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T13:40:12-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: FY 2016 DOI Economic Report  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T13:40:41-04:00  
[FY 2016 SHORT Econ Report Draft 2017-07-31.docx](#)

Hi Heather and Tim,

I'm just following-up on this matter. OMB has cleared the report. If you would like us to brief you on the report or walk you through the data visualization site please let us know.  
Ben

On Mon, Jun 12, 2017 at 11:33 AM, Simon, Benjamin <[benjamin\\_simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_simon@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Hi Tim and Heather,

The purpose of this note is to let you know that the FY 2016 DOI Economic Report is expected to complete the surname process soon. A copy of the report is attached.

This report includes summary information on the economic contributions associated with Interior's activities. Additional information, including State-level results and interactive visualization tools, will be available on a data visualization site (the FY 2015 information can be found at: <https://my.usgs.gov/doidv/>).

If you would like us to brief you on the report or walk you through the data visualization site please let us know.

Ben

--

Benjamin Simon, Ph.D., Chief DOI Economist  
Office of Policy Analysis  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington DC  
202 208 4916  
[benjamin\\_simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_simon@ios.doi.gov)

--

Benjamin Simon, Ph.D., Chief DOI Economist  
Office of Policy Analysis

U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington DC  
202 208 4916  
[benjamin\\_simon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:benjamin_simon@ios.doi.gov)

**To:** Thompson, Anne (NBCUniversal)[Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T14:20:13-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: NBC News Request--On Deadline  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T14:21:05-04:00

Hello Anne, your producer has the Department's statement.

-

Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

On Tue, Aug 8, 2017 at 2:17 PM, Thompson, Anne (NBCUniversal)  
<[Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com](mailto:Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com)> wrote:

I have interviewed Joel Clement for tonight's NBC Nightly News broadcast. I am looking to get a response to his claims from the DOI. Who should I contact please?

Thank you,

Anne Thompson



**To:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov];  
heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Jennifer A. Dlouhy (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:)  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T14:48:24-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Seeking response re employee reassignments  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T14:48:36-04:00

Good afternoon.

A colleague has a story going out on a forthcoming NOAA/AMS report on the "State of the Climate in 2016" that also references the National Climate Assessment, which of course got a little extra attention this morning in the Times.

The story is set to note NOAA has been willing/eager to publicize data about the threat of climate change, and that may be juxtaposed by an observation about the DOI, specifically a reference to Joel Clement's assertion that he was "retaliated against for speaking out publicly about the dangers that climate change poses to Alaska Native communities" and the inference that some of the other ~50 career staff reassignments were somehow tied to their climate change work. I suspect you can't comment on Clement's specific case, but do you want to weigh in on this notion Clement/UCS/others have raised that some of the SES reassignments appear to be part of a desire to somehow quash climate work?

Thanks,  
Jen.

---

---

Jennifer A. Dlouhy  
[jdlohy1@bloomberg.net](mailto:jdlohy1@bloomberg.net) / [jendlouhyenergy@gmail.com](mailto:jendlouhyenergy@gmail.com)  
[reporterjen@protonmail.com](mailto:reporterjen@protonmail.com)  
Desk: 202.807.2159  
Cell/Text/Signal: 202.905.3257  
Twitter: @jendlouhyhc  
Stories: <http://bloom.bg/23Crpvk>

**To:** Jennifer A. Dlouhy[jdlouhy1@bloomberg.net]  
**Cc:** Interior Press[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T14:50:01-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Seeking response re employee reassignments  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T14:50:47-04:00

NOAA is under Commerce.

-

Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
[@DOIPressSec](mailto:@DOIPressSec)  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

On Tue, Aug 8, 2017 at 2:48 PM, Jennifer A. Dlouhy (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) <[jdlouhy1@bloomberg.net](mailto:jdlouhy1@bloomberg.net)> wrote:

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Jen.

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Jennifer A. Dlouhy  
[jdlouhy1@bloomberg.net](mailto:jdlouhy1@bloomberg.net) / [jendlouhyenergy@gmail.com](mailto:jendlouhyenergy@gmail.com)  
[reporterjen@protonmail.com](mailto:reporterjen@protonmail.com)  
Desk: 202.807.2159  
Cell/Text/Signal: 202.905.3257  
Twitter: [@jendlouhyhc](https://twitter.com/jendlouhyhc)  
Stories: <http://bloom.bg/23Crpvk>

**To:** heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Jennifer A. Dlouhy (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:)  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T14:52:42-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Seeking response re employee reassignments  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T14:52:54-04:00

Thanks, Heather. I'm asking about a DOI matter (Clement, the SES transfers). I just wanted to be very explicit about the framing that this is in a story about these forthcoming reports and the idea that they may make some regulatory rollbacks more challenging so you had all the context here.  
Bolded, here is the DOI-specific piece of this request:

The story is set to note NOAA has been willing/eager to publicize data about the threat of climate change, and that may be juxtaposed by an observation about the DOI, specifically a reference to Joel Clement's assertion that he was "retaliated against for speaking out publicly about the dangers that climate change poses to Alaska Native communities" and the inference that some of the other ~50 career staff reassignments were somehow tied to their climate change work. I suspect you can't comment on Clement's specific case, but do you want to weigh in on this notion Clement/UCS/others have raised that some of the SES reassignments appear to be part of a desire to somehow quash climate work?

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Desk: 202.807.2159  
Cell/Text/Signal: 202.905.3257  
Twitter: @jendlouhyhc  
Stories: <http://bloom.bg/23Crpvk>

From: heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov  
Subject: Re: Seeking response re employee reassignments

NOAA is under Commerce.

-

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Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
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[reporterjen@protonmail.com](mailto:reporterjen@protonmail.com)  
Desk: 202.807.2159  
Cell/Text/Signal: 202.905.3257  
Twitter: [@jendlouhyhc](https://twitter.com/jendlouhyhc)  
Stories: <http://bloom.bg/23Crvpk>

**To:** Jennifer A. Dlouhy[jdlouhy1@bloomberg.net]  
**Cc:** Interior Press[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T15:19:52-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Seeking response re employee reassignments  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T15:20:45-04:00

Sorry Jenn - I was reading on my ipad and only saw the first line.

**Statement on the whistleblower**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

**Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

-

Heather Swift

Department of the Interior

@DOIPressSec

[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

On Tue, Aug 8, 2017 at 2:52 PM, Jennifer A. Dlouhy (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:)

[<jdlouhy1@bloomberg.net>](mailto:jdlouhy1@bloomberg.net) wrote:

Thanks, Heather. I'm asking about a DOI matter (Clement, the SES transfers). I just wanted to be very explicit about the framing that this is in a story about these forthcoming reports and the idea that they may make some regulatory rollbacks more challenging so you had all the context here.

Bolded, here is the DOI-specific piece of this request:

The story is set to note NOAA has been willing/eager to publicize data about the threat of climate change, and that may be juxtaposed by an observation about the DOI, specifically a reference to Joel Clement's assertion that he was "retaliated against for speaking out publicly about the dangers that climate change poses to Alaska Native communities" and the inference that some of the other ~50 career staff reassignments were somehow tied to their climate change work. I suspect you can't comment on Clement's specific case, but do you want to weigh in on this notion Clement/UCS/others have raised that some of the SES reassignments appear to be part of a desire to somehow quash climate work?

---

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Jennifer A. Dlouhy  
[jdlohy1@bloomberg.net](mailto:jdlohy1@bloomberg.net) / [jendlouhyenergy@gmail.com](mailto:jendlouhyenergy@gmail.com)  
[reporterjen@protonmail.com](mailto:reporterjen@protonmail.com)  
Desk: 202.807.2159  
Cell/Text/Signal: 202.905.3257  
Twitter: @jendlouhyhc  
Stories: <http://bloom.bg/23Crpvk>

From: [heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)  
Subject: Re: Seeking response re employee reassignments

NOAA is under Commerce.

-

Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) l [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

On Tue, Aug 8, 2017 at 2:48 PM, Jennifer A. Dlouhy (BLOOMBERG/ NEWSROOM:) <[jdlohy1@bloomberg.net](mailto:jdlohy1@bloomberg.net)> wrote:

Good afternoon.

A colleague has a story going out on a forthcoming NOAA/AMS report on the "State of the Climate in 2016" that also references the National Climate Assessment, which of course got a little extra attention this morning in the Times.

The story is set to note NOAA has been willing/eager to publicize data about the threat of climate change, and that may be juxtaposed by an observation about the DOI, specifically a reference to Joel Clement's [assertion](#) that he was "retaliated against for speaking out publicly about the dangers that climate change poses to Alaska Native communities" and the inference that some of the other ~50 career staff reassignments were somehow tied to their climate change work. I suspect you can't comment on Clement's specific case, but do you want to weigh in on this notion Clement/UCS/others have raised that some of the SES reassignments appear to be part of a desire to somehow quash climate work?

Thanks,  
Jen.

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Jennifer A. Dlouhy  
[jdlohy1@bloomberg.net](mailto:jdlohy1@bloomberg.net) / [jendlouhyenergy@gmail.com](mailto:jendlouhyenergy@gmail.com)  
[reporterjen@protonmail.com](mailto:reporterjen@protonmail.com)  
Desk: 202.807.2159  
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Twitter: @jendlouhyhc  
Stories: <http://bloom.bg/23Crpvk>

**To:** 'Swift, Heather'[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Thompson, Anne (NBCUniversal)  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T15:31:16-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** RE: NBC News Request--On Deadline  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T15:31:21-04:00

Heather,  
Do you know who you emailed the statement to?

**From:** Swift, Heather [mailto:heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 08, 2017 2:20 PM  
**To:** Thompson, Anne (NBCUniversal)  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov  
**Subject:** Re: NBC News Request--On Deadline

Hello Anne, your producer has the Department's statement.

-

Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
[Heather\\_Swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Heather_Swift@ios.doi.gov) | [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

On Tue, Aug 8, 2017 at 2:17 PM, Thompson, Anne (NBCUniversal)

<[Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com](mailto:Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com)> wrote:

I have interviewed Joel Clement for tonight's NBC Nightly News broadcast. I am looking to get a response to his claims from the DOI. Who should I contact please?

Thank you,  
Anne Thompson

**To:** Thompson, Anne (NBCUniversal)[Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com]  
**Cc:** Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov[Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-08-08T15:33:39-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: NBC News Request--On Deadline  
**Received:** 2017-08-08T15:34:30-04:00

Sorry, Anne. That was an NBC local producer.

**Statement on the whistleblower**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

**Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

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On Tue, Aug 8, 2017 at 3:31 PM, Thompson, Anne (NBCUniversal)  
<[Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com](mailto:Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com)> wrote:

Heather,

Do you know who you emailed the statement to?

**From:** Swift, Heather [mailto:[heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 08, 2017 2:20 PM  
**To:** Thompson, Anne (NBCUniversal)  
**Cc:** [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)  
**Subject:** Re: NBC News Request--On Deadline



Hello Anne, your producer has the Department's statement.

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Heather Swift

Department of the Interior

@DOIPressSec

Heather\_Swift@ios.doi.gov | Interior\_Press@ios.doi.gov

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<[Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com](mailto:Anne.Thompson@nbcuni.com)> wrote:

I have interviewed Joel Clement for tonight's NBC Nightly News broadcast. I am looking to get a response to his claims from the DOI. Who should I contact please?

Thank you,

Anne Thompson

**To:** Mashburn, John K. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]; Flynn, Matthew (b)(6) gov]; Uli, Gabriella M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov];  
Murphy, Christine M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]; Paranzino, Anthony M. EOP/WHO (b)(6) gov]  
**From:** Domenech, Douglas  
**Sent:** 2017-08-09T14:04:35-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Interior Cabinet Affairs Report for 8/9/17  
**Received:** 2017-08-09T14:05:03-04:00  
[DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 8-9-17.docx](#)

Attached and copied below.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 8/9/17**

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor  
Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

VOTED BEST REPORT! ☺

NOTE: Both Domenech and Mashburn will be on leave August 14-18.

NOTE: DOI is gathering emergency management information for the Territory of Guam in light of comments from the President of North Korea. There are 58 DOI personnel located on the combination of Guam and Saipan. DOI personnel, where not assigned specific actions/activities according to local emergency procedures pertinent to their assigned duties, act in accordance with local government direction. There are no known emergency action plans specific to DOI activities in the area with respect to a threat such as nuclear attack.

**Status of the Secretary**

TODAY: The Secretary will be on personal leave August 5-19 out of the country. (Greece and Turkey)

**Status of the Deputy Secretary**

In Washington, DC.  
Office meetings and briefings.

**Media TODAY**

**GRAZING TO CONTINUE ON PARTS OF CRATERS OF THE MOON - DECISION ADVANCES TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S SUPPORT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today announced that livestock grazing will continue on BLM-managed portions of the Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho. The decision demonstrates the Trump Administration's effort to support traditional uses such as grazing on public lands while providing opportunities for recreation and promoting conservation.

“By working together with our stakeholders, we can strike a balance of various uses in this iconic national monument while also serving the greater community,” said BLM Acting Director

Michael Nedd. “Our multiple-use mission helps ensure that public lands—including Craters of the Moon—work for local communities and visitors alike.”

### **SECRETARY ZINKE EXPANDS HUNTING AND FISHING OPPORTUNITIES AT 10 NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES**

(WASHINGTON) In his latest effort to increase access to hunting and fishing on public lands and waters, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke today announced a proposal to open or expand opportunities at 10 national wildlife refuges. If finalized, this would bring the number of refuges where the public may hunt up to 373, and up to 312 where fishing would be permitted.

“I grew up in the mountains of northwest Montana, where I spent my time hunting and fishing on our shared public lands. I was lucky to take my boys out on the same land that my dad and granddad took me,” said Secretary Zinke. “As the steward of our public lands, one of my top priorities is to open up access wherever possible for hunting and fishing so that more families have the opportunity to pass down the heritage. The last thing I want to see is hunting and fishing become elite sports. These ten refuges will provide incredible opportunities for sportsmen and anglers across the country to access the land and connect with the wildlife.”

### **SECRETARY ZINKE MOVES TO ACCEPT 3,595 ACRES OF WILDERNESS FOR SPORTSMEN'S ACCESS TO SABINOSO WILDERNESS AREA IN NEW MEXICO**

WASHINGTON – Following a trip to New Mexico, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke today announced he and the Department - through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - are in the process of accepting the donation of 3,595 acres (formerly known as the Rimrock Rose Ranch) that are adjacent to Sabinoso Wilderness to be included as part of the wilderness.

If approved, the donated land will provide public access to the 16,000-acre Sabinoso Wilderness, which is wholly surrounded by private land. By adding the donated land, the Sabinoso will connect with neighboring BLM land and make the Sabinoso accessible to the public for the first time ever.

### **White House Report (Yesterday)**

#### **Press Inquiries:**

· CBS News & NBC News: REQUEST-- I have interviewed Joel Clement for tonight’s NBC Nightly News broadcast. I am looking to get a response to his claims from the DOI.  
—RESPONSE— Statement on the whistleblower The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter. Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI: The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees. The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be

called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency. Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

- KXLH TV Helena, MT (Mike Dennison): - REQUEST – Comment on the ad from Backcountry Hunters and Anglers? – RESPONSE - Secretary Zinke is carrying out the review of some national monuments in accordance with the April 26 executive order. Of the hundreds of national monuments, 27 were put under review. So far, the Secretary has recommended that no changes be made to five monuments. The Secretary has visited monuments in half a dozen states and met with stakeholders who represent all sides of the issues. In fact, the Secretary recently took the time to meet with and hike with members of the group that is running the ads while he was in New Mexico. The Secretary is dedicated to ensuring all voices are heard in this process.
- Various inquiries regarding local national park programs.

### **Top Stories**

- Las Vegas Review Journal: Feds to relax rules protecting sage grouse in Nevada, 10 other states
- Denver Post: Trump team relaxes land-use rules for saving sage grouse, opening more of the West for fossil fuels development
- USA Today: Greater sage-grouse: Conservation changes praised, provoke alarm

### **Top Issues and Accomplishments**

Potential POTUS Event August 25 with Secretary Zinke related to the 101<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the National Park Service.

Secretary is on personal leave. No public appearances scheduled.

Later this week, DOI and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management will hold an offshore oil and gas sale titled Gulf Lease Sale #249 in the Gulf of Mexico.

Tomorrow DOI will issue a press release announcing the addition of 3,600 acres of land to the Sabinoso Wilderness Area in New Mexico

### **WEEK AHEAD August 9 thru August 17, 2017**

Status of the Secretary: The Secretary will be on personal leave August 5-19 out of the country (Greece and Turkey).

- Aug 9: DOI will issue a press release announcing the addition of 3,600 acres of land to the Sabinoso Wilderness Area in New Mexico
- Later this week, DOI and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management will hold an offshore oil and gas sale titled Gulf Lease Sale #249 in the Gulf of Mexico.
- TBD Releases on Monument Review (announce ones not under review anymore).
- TBD: Department-Level Release: DOI will announced FWS proposal to expand hunting and fishing opportunities on 10 National Wildlife Refuges.
- August 15 (Tent.): Department-Level Release: DOI and FWS will announce \$48 million in funding to state wildlife agencies provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the State Wildlife Grants program.

### **National Park Service**

- August 10: National NPS Release: NPS will announce the unveiling of Unveil Junior Ranger Eclipse Explorer Program for the 2017 North American Total Solar Eclipse.
- August 11: Rep. Tom McClintock will be visiting Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. The purpose of the visit is to meet with the superintendent and receive a tour of the parks. Among topics likely to be discussed are annual visitation, tree mortality from drought, wildland fire, and maintenance backlog progress.
- August TBD: National NPS Release: NPS announcement of annual Rutgers report on NPS Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program economic impact. Tax credits 2016 contributed \$12.3 billion in output to the U.S. economy, added \$6.2 billion in GDP. Historic preservation tax incentives encourage investments in historic preservation and revitalization of communities small and large across the country.
- August TBD: National NPS Release: The National Park Service will announce \$1.657 million in grants to Indian tribes and museums to assist in consultation, documentation, and repatriation of ancestors and cultural items back to Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations.
- August TBD: National NPS Release: NPS will announce \$1.2 million in grants to fund preservation, restoration, and education projects at several Japanese American confinement sites.

#### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

- TBD: FWS/USGS IF-Asked Only: USGS to release a report on the Species Status Assessment for the Lesser Prairie Chicken. The study was commissioned by FWS.
- August 9: Local FWS Release: FWS announces six-month deadline extension for the final listing determination for the Texas Hornshell
- August TBD: National FWS Release: FWS to release results of 2016 Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Survey Preliminary Report. A snapshot of the results show that Hunter numbers are down (not statistically significant), angler numbers are up (not statistically significant), and wildlife watching numbers have increased greatly especially for people watching wildlife in their own backyards.
- August TBD: National FWS Release: FWS plans to announce \$4,254,638 in Tribal Wildlife Grant awards to federally recognized tribes for 25 projects in 14 states to fund a wide range of fish and wildlife conservation efforts. Tribal Wildlife Grants are used to provide technical and financial assistance to tribes for the development and implementation of programs that benefit fish and wildlife resources and their habitat.

#### **Bureau of Land Management**

- Week of August 14: Majority staff of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources have requested a NEPA overview briefing. Date and participants TBD.
- August 14: Local BLM Release: BLM-CO White River Field Office will announce its decision approving the removal of wild horses that have moved outside the boundaries of the 190,000-acre Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area (HMA). The Environmental Assessment (EA) is a baseline document for potential future wild horse removals outside the HMA that could include using helicopters and/or bait- and water-trapping. It specifically includes a proposed helicopter gather of up to 100 wild horses outside the HMA this fall. The Field Office estimates there are 217 wild horses outside the HMA within the analysis area.
- August 15-19: The Wyoming Wild Horse and Burro Program will host a wild horse and burro showcase and adoption at the Wyoming State Fair in Douglas. The showcase will include competitions among wild horse owners. Local media is likely to attend.

**U.S. Geological Survey**

- August 9: National USGS Release: USGS will release a study of streams in 11 Midwestern states that found more than 180 pesticides, some at levels that could harm aquatic insects. On average, 54 pesticide compounds were detected in each stream.

**Bureau of Reclamation**

- August 11 and 18 to 20: Media invited: Two-part full-scale security exercise at Flaming Gorge Dam in Wyoming. The purpose of the exercise is to evaluate physical and electronic security systems, gauge the effectiveness of the Emergency Action Plan, provide an opportunity for Reclamation staff to participate in Unified Command in a controlled environment with Law Enforcement agencies and identify areas for improvement in security and emergency management. This exercise also enables local emergency responders to practice and assess their own response capabilities while assisting Reclamation in management a simulated emergency.
- August 14: Local Reclamation Release: Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) on the Sites Reservoir Project. The project is a proposed above-ground water storage facility off-stream of the Sacramento River near the town of Maxwell. There will be a comment period and two public meetings are tentatively scheduled—September 26 in Maxwell and September 28 in Sacramento.
- August 15: Local Reclamation Release: Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) on the San Luis Low Point Improvement Project. The project would address water supply reliability and schedule certainty issues associated with low water levels in San Luis Reservoir and help maintain a high-quality, reliable, and cost-effective water supply for Santa Clara Valley Water District, and ensure the district receives their annual Central Valley Project contract allocations at the time and at the level of quality needed to meet their existing water supply commitments. A comment period and two public meetings are tentatively scheduled—August 30 in San Jose and August 31 in Sacramento.
- August 17: National Reclamation Release: August 17, the FAA will release new restrictions for unmanned aerial systems (UAS or drones) with regard to five national critical infrastructure-designated dams; Grand Coulee in Washington, Shasta and Folsom in California, Glen Canyon in Arizona, and Hoover in Nevada/Arizona. Reclamation will send a news release on August 17. The FAA will begin advance notifications on their website and social media beginning August 9.

**Bureau of Ocean Energy Management**

- August 10: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will send a note to stakeholders regarding the draft EIS for G&G Activities in GOM.
- August 11: National BOEM Release: Alaska Press Release on Draft EIS for Liberty DPP.
- August 16: National BOEM Release: BOEM will issue release on Gulf Sale 249.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will send a note to stakeholders announcing environmental study reports posted to ESPIS from April-June.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Note to Stakeholders on Information Transfer Meeting to be held in New Orleans August 22-24.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will issue Note to Stakeholders on Draft Guidelines for the Use of Design Envelopes for Offshore Wind Energy Facilities.
- TBD: National BOEM Release: BOEM release on Marine Minerals Rule. The rule is finalized and in surnaming.

**Office of Wildland Fire**

- August TBD: OWF anticipates releasing the Preparedness Level 5 "Moses" Letter from the Secretary, with NIFC releasing the Press Release if and when we go to PL 5. We are still holding at PL 4.

- **CONGRESSIONAL**

Nothing Scheduled.

- **Political Appointee Update**

DOI politicals on board = 51

5 nominated awaiting confirmation:

Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.

Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.

Pending Senate floor vote: Doug Domenech, Assistant Secretary Insular Areas.

Pending Senate Committee Hearing 9/7: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management.

Pending Senate Committee Hearing 9/7: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor.

**Secretary Speaking Invitations**

**Accepted**

8/5-20 - Personal

9/13 - Congressional Sportsmen Foundation reception (DC)

9/20-21 - Gala and Ribbon Cutting for the Wonders of Wildlife Museum and Aquarium at the Bass Pro HQ (Springfield, MO)

**Outstanding Invitations in Process**

8/25-26 - Steamboat Institute's 9th Annual Freedom Conference & Festival (Steamboat Springs, CO)

9/8 - San Antonio Missions 2017 World Heritage Festival Luncheon

9/6/17 - Edison Electric Institute Board of Directors Conference (Colorado Springs, CO)

9/10-13 - Annual Mtg of the Assoc of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Snowbird, UT)

9/12 - Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative Annual Meeting (St. Louis, MO)

9/17 - 150th Anniversary for the Antietam National Cemetery (Antietam)

9/22-24 - NRA Women's Leadership Forum Summit (Dallas, TX)

9/23 - National Mining Hall of Fame (Denver, CO)

9/23 - Southern Illinois Hunting & Fishing Days Inc. (Carterville, IL)

9/26 - GAO for international conference on extractive industries (DC)

9/26 - S&P Annual Asia Pacific Petroleum Conference (Singapore)

9/27-28 - Cohen Veterans Care Summit (DC)

9/28-30 - Council for National Policy

Open - Jeffersons Islands Club Citizen of the Year Award (DC)

open - Americans for Tax Reform (DC)

Open - Weyrich Lunch (DC)

Open - Detroit Economic Club

**Declining**

8/8-12 - American Legion Northwest Regional Baseball Tournament (Missoula, MT)  
 8/14-17 - Enercom Conference (Denver, CO)  
 8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)  
 8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)  
 8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)  
 8/22 - Lake Tahoe Summit (Lake Tahoe, CA)  
 8/22-24 - National Native American Law Enforcement Association (Las Vegas, NV)  
 8/30 - West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (White Sulphur Springs, WV)  
 9/5 - National Association of State Park Directors and Annual Meeting (Missoula, Montana)  
 9/6 - Montana Range Tour (Lewistown, MT)  
 9/12 - Conference on Transportation Needs of National Parks and Public Lands (DC)  
 9/19-21 - Montana Wood Products Association - Forest Resources Association Convention (Whitefish, MT)  
 9/23 - Buffalo Bill Centennial Ball (Cody, Wyoming)  
 9/26 - Billings Chamber Annual Mtg (Billings, MT)  
 10/1-3 - New Mexico Oil and Gas Association (Santa Fe)  
 10/1 - Grand Junction Petroleum & Mining Club (Grand Junction, CO)  
 10/4-5 - Montana Equipment Dealers Association (Whitefish, MT)  
 10/12 - Natural Areas Association Conference (Fort Collins, CO)

### **Emergency Management**

In Idaho, the Powerline Fire has burned 53,076 (+1,062) acres and is 47 (+22)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 468 (+65) personnel, which includes 123 (-3) DOI personnel. There are 20 (no change) residential structures threatened and 150 (no change) evacuees. Native American cultural resources, utility lines, and pipelines remain threatened for the time being; however, additional perimeter growth is not expected, and risks to resources and utilities are expected to diminish greatly in the coming days. Full containment is expected on August 13.

In Oregon, the Spruce Lake Fire in Crater Lake National Park (NPS) has burned 4,681 (no change) acres. The fire is 23 (+4)-percent contained and managed by a Type-2 IMT with 384 (-13) personnel assigned, including 15 (+1) DOI personnel. There are 39 (no change) residential and 13 (no change) commercial structures threatened. Several trails in Crater Lake National Park are closed, including the Pacific Crest Trail. The Park's West Rim Road remains closed, and an evacuation notice has been issued for the Visitor Center at Rim Village, Park Headquarters, and Mazama Village. Full containment is expected on August 31.

### **Outside Media of Interest**

#### **Uncertainty As National Monument Review Deadline Nears.**

The St. George (UT) Spectrum (8/8, DeMille) reports that "two weeks ahead of a Trump administration deadline to complete a review of 27 national monuments, including Utah's Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, the status remains uncertain for most of them." Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has "already issued a preliminary recommendation to shrink the Bears Ears monument, and over the course of the past several weeks he has said that five others should remain monuments and go untouched." However, "the details behind what might happen at Bears Ears and the fate of the 21 other monuments remain a question mark."



### **Sage Grouse Conservation Changes Praised, Provoke Alarm.**

The AP (8/8, Gruver, Brown) reports that the Trump Administration has “opened the door to industry-friendly changes to a sweeping plan imposed by his predecessor to protect a ground-dwelling bird across vast areas of the West.” Representatives of the ranching and energy industries lauded “the policy shift as needed to give states flexibility.” However, wildlife advocates are concerned “that the proposed changes would undercut a hard-won struggle to protect the greater sage grouse.”

### **Scientist Claims Administration Punishing Him For Speaking Out About Climate Change.**

Chip Reid of the VideoCBS Evening News (8/8, story 5, 2:30, Mason) reported on an interview with US Interior Department scientist Joel Clement about “what happens to a government scientist who speaks up about” climate change. For the past seven years, Clement has been working in Alaskan villages that “are literally melting into the Arctic Ocean.” Clement addressed the issue last month at the UN, and six days later, “he was one of about 50 department employees who were assigned to new jobs.” Clement has filed a whistleblower complaint, saying, “I believe that the Trump Administration is retaliating against me for disclosing these risks to these Alaskan native villages.”

### **Commentary: Slaughtering Wild Horses Would Be Simplistic And Cruel.**

In an op-ed for the Salt Lake (UT) Tribune (8/9, Hammer), Rob Hammer, the proprietor of Wild Horse Tourist, opposes an amendment to the Interior Department’s 2018 spending bill introduced by Rep. Chris Stewart “that would send thousands of America’s wild horses to slaughterhouses.” Hammer argues that the “proposal to simply slaughter these cherished symbols of our national heritage amounts to greed-driven cruelty and should be stripped from the Appropriations Bill before final Congressional approval.” Instead, Hammer supports “comprehensive approaches that generally include some combination of administering long-acting birth control, retiring grazing leases, increasing lease fees, reapportioning AUM allotments, protecting large predators, returning herd areas to their original acreage and repopulating zeroed areas.”

### **After Trump Warning Of “Fire And Fury,” North Korea Threatens Strike On Guam.**

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**Sent:** 2017-08-09T14:05:55-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Interior Cabinet Affairs Report for 8/9/17  
**Received:** 2017-08-09T14:06:23-04:00  
[DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 8-9-17.docx](#)

Attached and copied below.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS – 8/9/17**

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor  
Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

VOTED BEST REPORT! ☺

NOTE: Both Domenech and Mashburn will be on leave August 14-18.

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TODAY: The Secretary will be on personal leave August 5-19 out of the country. (Greece and Turkey)

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In Washington, DC.  
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**GRAZING TO CONTINUE ON PARTS OF CRATERS OF THE MOON - DECISION ADVANCES TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S SUPPORT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

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“I grew up in the mountains of northwest Montana, where I spent my time hunting and fishing on our shared public lands. I was lucky to take my boys out on the same land that my dad and granddad took me,” said Secretary Zinke. “As the steward of our public lands, one of my top priorities is to open up access wherever possible for hunting and fishing so that more families have the opportunity to pass down the heritage. The last thing I want to see is hunting and fishing become elite sports. These ten refuges will provide incredible opportunities for sportsmen and anglers across the country to access the land and connect with the wildlife.”

## **SECRETARY ZINKE MOVES TO ACCEPT 3,595 ACRES OF WILDERNESS FOR SPORTSMEN'S ACCESS TO SABINOSO WILDERNESS AREA IN NEW MEXICO**

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If approved, the donated land will provide public access to the 16,000-acre Sabinoso Wilderness, which is wholly surrounded by private land. By adding the donated land, the Sabinoso will connect with neighboring BLM land and make the Sabinoso accessible to the public for the first time ever.

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· CBS News & NBC News: REQUEST-- I have interviewed Joel Clement for tonight's NBC Nightly News broadcast. I am looking to get a response to his claims from the DOI. —RESPONSE— Statement on the whistleblower The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter. Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI: The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees. The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive

management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency. Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

- KXLH TV Helena, MT (Mike Dennison): - REQUEST – Comment on the ad from Backcountry Hunters and Anglers? – RESPONSE - Secretary Zinke is carrying out the review of some national monuments in accordance with the April 26 executive order. Of the hundreds of national monuments, 27 were put under review. So far, the Secretary has recommended that no changes be made to five monuments. The Secretary has visited monuments in half a dozen states and met with stakeholders who represent all sides of the issues. In fact, the Secretary recently took the time to meet with and hike with members of the group that is running the ads while he was in New Mexico. The Secretary is dedicated to ensuring all voices are heard in this process.
- Various inquiries regarding local national park programs.

### **Top Stories**

- Las Vegas Review Journal: Feds to relax rules protecting sage grouse in Nevada, 10 other states
- Denver Post: Trump team relaxes land-use rules for saving sage grouse, opening more of the West for fossil fuels development
- USA Today: Greater sage-grouse: Conservation changes praised, provoke alarm

### **Top Issues and Accomplishments**

Potential POTUS Event August 25 with Secretary Zinke related to the 101<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the National Park Service.

Secretary is on personal leave. No public appearances scheduled.

Later this week, DOI and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management will hold an offshore oil and gas sale titled Gulf Lease Sale #249 in the Gulf of Mexico.

Tomorrow DOI will issue a press release announcing the addition of 3,600 acres of land to the Sabinoso Wilderness Area in New Mexico

### **WEEK AHEAD August 9 thru August 17, 2017**

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- TBD Releases on Monument Review (announce ones not under review anymore).
- TBD: Department-Level Release: DOI will announced FWS proposal to expand hunting and fishing opportunities on 10 National Wildlife Refuges.
- August 15 (Tent.): Department-Level Release: DOI and FWS will announce \$48 million in funding to state wildlife agencies provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the State Wildlife Grants program.

### **National Park Service**

- August 10: National NPS Release: NPS will announce the unveiling of Unveil Junior Ranger Eclipse Explorer Program for the 2017 North American Total Solar Eclipse.
- August 11: Rep. Tom McClintock will be visiting Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. The purpose of the visit is to meet with the superintendent and receive a tour of the parks. Among topics likely to be discussed are annual visitation, tree mortality from drought, wildland fire, and maintenance backlog progress.
- August TBD: National NPS Release: NPS announcement of annual Rutgers report on NPS Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program economic impact. Tax credits 2016 contributed \$12.3 billion in output to the U.S. economy, added \$6.2 billion in GDP. Historic preservation tax incentives encourage investments in historic preservation and revitalization of communities small and large across the country.
- August TBD: National NPS Release: The National Park Service will announce \$1.657 million in grants to Indian tribes and museums to assist in consultation, documentation, and repatriation of ancestors and cultural items back to Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations.
- August TBD: National NPS Release: NPS will announce \$1.2 million in grants to fund preservation, restoration, and education projects at several Japanese American confinement sites.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

- TBD: FWS/USGS If-Asked Only: USGS to release a report on the Species Status Assessment for the Lesser Prairie Chicken. The study was commissioned by FWS.
- August 9: Local FWS Release: FWS announces six-month deadline extension for the final listing determination for the Texas Hornshell
- August TBD: National FWS Release: FWS to release results of 2016 Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife Associated Survey Preliminary Report. A snapshot of the results show that Hunter numbers are down (not statistically significant), angler numbers are up (not statistically significant), and wildlife watching numbers have increased greatly especially for people watching wildlife in their own backyards.
- August TBD: National FWS Release: FWS plans to announce \$4,254,638 in Tribal Wildlife Grant awards to federally recognized tribes for 25 projects in 14 states to fund a wide range of fish and wildlife conservation efforts. Tribal Wildlife Grants are used to provide technical and financial assistance to tribes for the development and implementation of programs that benefit fish and wildlife resources and their habitat.

### **Bureau of Land Management**

- Week of August 14: Majority staff of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources have requested a NEPA overview briefing. Date and participants TBD.
- August 14: Local BLM Release: BLM-CO White River Field Office will announce its decision approving the removal of wild horses that have moved outside the boundaries of the 190,000-acre Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area (HMA). The Environmental Assessment (EA) is a baseline document for potential future wild horse removals outside the HMA that could include using helicopters and/or bait- and water-trapping. It specifically includes a proposed helicopter gather of up to 100 wild horses outside the HMA this fall. The Field Office estimates there are 217 wild horses outside the HMA within the analysis area.

- August 15-19: The Wyoming Wild Horse and Burro Program will host a wild horse and burro showcase and adoption at the Wyoming State Fair in Douglas. The showcase will include competitions among wild horse owners. Local media is likely to attend.

#### **U.S. Geological Survey**

- August 9: National USGS Release: USGS will release a study of streams in 11 Midwestern states that found more than 180 pesticides, some at levels that could harm aquatic insects. On average, 54 pesticide compounds were detected in each stream.

#### **Bureau of Reclamation**

- August 11 and 18 to 20: Media invited: Two-part full-scale security exercise at Flaming Gorge Dam in Wyoming. The purpose of the exercise is to evaluate physical and electronic security systems, gauge the effectiveness of the Emergency Action Plan, provide an opportunity for Reclamation staff to participate in Unified Command in a controlled environment with Law Enforcement agencies and identify areas for improvement in security and emergency management. This exercise also enables local emergency responders to practice and assess their own response capabilities while assisting Reclamation in management a simulated emergency.
- August 14: Local Reclamation Release: Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) on the Sites Reservoir Project. The project is a proposed above-ground water storage facility off-stream of the Sacramento River near the town of Maxwell. There will be a comment period and two public meetings are tentatively scheduled—September 26 in Maxwell and September 28 in Sacramento.
- August 15: Local Reclamation Release: Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) on the San Luis Low Point Improvement Project. The project would address water supply reliability and schedule certainty issues associated with low water levels in San Luis Reservoir and help maintain a high-quality, reliable, and cost-effective water supply for Santa Clara Valley Water District, and ensure the district receives their annual Central Valley Project contract allocations at the time and at the level of quality needed to meet their existing water supply commitments. A comment period and two public meetings are tentatively scheduled—August 30 in San Jose and August 31 in Sacramento.
- August 17: National Reclamation Release: August 17, the FAA will release new restrictions for unmanned aerial systems (UAS or drones) with regard to five national critical infrastructure-designated dams; Grand Coulee in Washington, Shasta and Folsom in California, Glen Canyon in Arizona, and Hoover in Nevada/Arizona. Reclamation will send a news release on August 17. The FAA will begin advance notifications on their website and social media beginning August 9.

#### **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management**

- August 10: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will send a note to stakeholders regarding the draft EIS for G&G Activities in GOM.
- August 11: National BOEM Release: Alaska Press Release on Draft EIS for Liberty DPP.
- August 16: National BOEM Release: BOEM will issue release on Gulf Sale 249.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will send a note to stakeholders announcing environmental study reports posted to ESPIS from April-June.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Note to Stakeholders on Information Transfer Meeting to be held in New Orleans August 22-24.

- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will issue Note to Stakeholders on Draft Guidelines for the Use of Design Envelopes for Offshore Wind Energy Facilities.
- TBD: National BOEM Release: BOEM release on Marine Minerals Rule. The rule is finalized and in surnaming.

#### **Office of Wildland Fire**

- August TBD: OWF anticipates releasing the Preparedness Level 5 "Moses" Letter from the Secretary, with NIFC releasing the Press Release if and when we go to PL 5. We are still holding at PL 4.

#### **CONGRESSIONAL**

Nothing Scheduled.

#### **Political Appointee Update**

DOI politicals on board = 51

5 nominated awaiting confirmation:

Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.

Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.

Pending Senate floor vote: Doug Domenech, Assistant Secretary Insular Areas.

Pending Senate Committee Hearing 9/7: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management.

Pending Senate Committee Hearing 9/7: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor.

#### **Secretary Speaking Invitations**

##### **Accepted**

8/5-20 - Personal

9/13 - Congressional Sportsmen Foundation reception (DC)

9/20-21 - Gala and Ribbon Cutting for the Wonders of Wildlife Museum and Aquarium at the Bass Pro HQ (Springfield, MO)

##### **Outstanding Invitations in Process**

8/25-26 - Steamboat Institute's 9th Annual Freedom Conference & Festival (Steamboat Springs, CO)

9/8 - San Antonio Missions 2017 World Heritage Festival Luncheon

9/6/17 - Edison Electric Institute Board of Directors Conference (Colorado Springs, CO)

9/10-13 - Annual Mtg of the Assoc of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Snowbird, UT)

9/12 - Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative Annual Meeting (St. Louis, MO)

9/17 - 150th Anniversary for the Antietam National Cemetery (Antietam)

9/22-24 - NRA Women's Leadership Forum Summit (Dallas, TX)

9/23 - National Mining Hall of Fame (Denver, CO)

9/23 - Southern Illinois Hunting & Fishing Days Inc. (Carterville, IL)

9/26 - GAO for international conference on extractive industries (DC)

9/26 - S&P Annual Asia Pacific Petroleum Conference (Singapore)

9/27-28 - Cohen Veterans Care Summit (DC)

9/28-30 - Council for National Policy

Open - Jeffersons Islands Club Citizen of the Year Award (DC)

open - Americans for Tax Reform (DC)



Open - Weyrich Lunch (DC)  
Open - Detroit Economic Club

**Declining**

8/8-12 - American Legion Northwest Regional Baseball Tournament (Missoula, MT)  
8/14-17 - Enercom Conference (Denver, CO)  
8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)  
8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)  
8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)  
8/22 - Lake Tahoe Summit (Lake Tahoe, CA)  
8/22-24 - National Native American Law Enforcement Association (Las Vegas, NV)  
8/30 - West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (White Sulphur Springs, WV)  
9/5 - National Association of State Park Directors and Annual Meeting (Missoula, Montana)  
9/6 - Montana Range Tour (Lewistown, MT)  
9/12 - Conference on Transportation Needs of National Parks and Public Lands (DC)  
9/19-21 - Montana Wood Products Association - Forest Resources Association Convention (Whitefish, MT)  
9/23 - Buffalo Bill Centennial Ball (Cody, Wyoming)  
9/26 - Billings Chamber Annual Mtg (Billings, MT)  
10/1-3 - New Mexico Oil and Gas Association (Santa Fe)  
10/1 - Grand Junction Petroleum & Mining Club (Grand Junction, CO)  
10/4-5 - Montana Equipment Dealers Association (Whitefish, MT)  
10/12 - Natural Areas Association Conference (Fort Collins, CO)

**Emergency Management**

In Idaho, the Powerline Fire has burned 53,076 (+1,062) acres and is 47 (+22)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 468 (+65) personnel, which includes 123 (-3) DOI personnel. There are 20 (no change) residential structures threatened and 150 (no change) evacuees. Native American cultural resources, utility lines, and pipelines remain threatened for the time being; however, additional perimeter growth is not expected, and risks to resources and utilities are expected to diminish greatly in the coming days. Full containment is expected on August 13.

In Oregon, the Spruce Lake Fire in Crater Lake National Park (NPS) has burned 4,681 (no change) acres. The fire is 23 (+4)-percent contained and managed by a Type-2 IMT with 384 (-13) personnel assigned, including 15 (+1) DOI personnel. There are 39 (no change) residential and 13 (no change) commercial structures threatened. Several trails in Crater Lake National Park are closed, including the Pacific Crest Trail. The Park's West Rim Road remains closed, and an evacuation notice has been issued for the Visitor Center at Rim Village, Park Headquarters, and Mazama Village. Full containment is expected on August 31.

**Outside Media of Interest**

**Uncertainty As National Monument Review Deadline Nears.**

The St. George (UT) Spectrum (8/8, DeMille) reports that "two weeks ahead of a Trump administration deadline to complete a review of 27 national monuments, including Utah's Bears

Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, the status remains uncertain for most of them.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has “already issued a preliminary recommendation to shrink the Bears Ears monument, and over the course of the past several weeks he has said that five others should remain monuments and go untouched.” However, “the details behind what might happen at Bears Ears and the fate of the 21 other monuments remain a question mark.”

#### **Sage Grouse Conservation Changes Praised, Provoke Alarm.**

The AP (8/8, Gruver, Brown) reports that the Trump Administration has “opened the door to industry-friendly changes to a sweeping plan imposed by his predecessor to protect a ground-dwelling bird across vast areas of the West.” Representatives of the ranching and energy industries lauded “the policy shift as needed to give states flexibility.” However, wildlife advocates are concerned “that the proposed changes would undercut a hard-won struggle to protect the greater sage grouse.”

#### **Scientist Claims Administration Punishing Him For Speaking Out About Climate Change.**

Chip Reid of the VideoCBS Evening News (8/8, story 5, 2:30, Mason) reported on an interview with US Interior Department scientist Joel Clement about “what happens to a government scientist who speaks up about” climate change. For the past seven years, Clement has been working in Alaskan villages that “are literally melting into the Arctic Ocean.” Clement addressed the issue last month at the UN, and six days later, “he was one of about 50 department employees who were assigned to new jobs.” Clement has filed a whistleblower complaint, saying, “I believe that the Trump Administration is retaliating against me for disclosing these risks to these Alaskan native villages.”

#### **Commentary: Slaughtering Wild Horses Would Be Simplistic And Cruel.**

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- August 17: National Reclamation Release: August 17, the FAA will release new restrictions for unmanned aerial systems (UAS or drones) with regard to five national critical infrastructure-designated dams; Grand Coulee in Washington, Shasta and Folsom in California, Glen Canyon in Arizona, and Hoover in Nevada/Arizona. Reclamation will send a news release on August 17. The FAA will begin advance notifications on their website and social media beginning August 9.

#### **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management**

- August 10: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will send a note to stakeholders regarding the draft EIS for G&G Activities in GOM.
- August 11: National BOEM Release: Alaska Press Release on Draft EIS for Liberty DPP.
- August 16: National BOEM Release: BOEM will issue release on Gulf Sale 249.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will send a note to stakeholders announcing environmental study reports posted to ESPIS from April-June.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Note to Stakeholders on Information Transfer Meeting to be held in New Orleans August 22-24.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will issue Note to Stakeholders on Draft Guidelines for the Use of Design Envelopes for Offshore Wind Energy Facilities.
- TBD: National BOEM Release: BOEM release on Marine Minerals Rule. The rule is finalized and in surnaming.

**Office of Wildland Fire**

- August TBD: OWF anticipates releasing the Preparedness Level 5 "Moses" Letter from the Secretary, with NIFC releasing the Press Release if and when we go to PL 5. We are still holding at PL 4.

**CONGRESSIONAL**

Nothing Scheduled.

**Political Appointee Update**

DOI politicals on board = 51

5 nominated awaiting confirmation:

Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.

Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.

Pending Senate floor vote: Doug Domenech, Assistant Secretary Insular Areas.

Pending Senate Committee Hearing 9/7: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management.

Pending Senate Committee Hearing 9/7: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor.

**Secretary Speaking Invitations**

**Accepted**

8/5-20 - Personal

9/13 - Congressional Sportsmen Foundation reception (DC)

9/20-21 - Gala and Ribbon Cutting for the Wonders of Wildlife Museum and Aquarium at the Bass Pro HQ (Springfield, MO)

**Outstanding Invitations in Process**

8/25-26 - Steamboat Institute's 9th Annual Freedom Conference & Festival (Steamboat Springs, CO)

9/8 - San Antonio Missions 2017 World Heritage Festival Luncheon

9/6/17 - Edison Electric Institute Board of Directors Conference (Colorado Springs, CO)

9/10-13 - Annual Mtg of the Assoc of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Snowbird, UT)

9/12 - Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative Annual Meeting (St. Louis, MO)

9/17 - 150th Anniversary for the Antietam National Cemetery (Antietam)

9/22-24 - NRA Women's Leadership Forum Summit (Dallas, TX)

9/23 - National Mining Hall of Fame (Denver, CO)

9/23 - Southern Illinois Hunting & Fishing Days Inc. (Carterville, IL)

9/26 - GAO for international conference on extractive industries (DC)

9/26 - S&P Annual Asia Pacific Petroleum Conference (Singapore)

9/27-28 - Cohen Veterans Care Summit (DC)

9/28-30 - Council for National Policy

Open - Jeffersons Islands Club Citizen of the Year Award (DC)

open - Americans for Tax Reform (DC)

Open - Weyrich Lunch (DC)  
Open - Detroit Economic Club

**Declining**

8/8-12 - American Legion Northwest Regional Baseball Tournament (Missoula, MT)  
8/14-17 - Enercom Conference (Denver, CO)  
8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)  
8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)  
8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)  
8/22 - Lake Tahoe Summit (Lake Tahoe, CA)  
8/22-24 - National Native American Law Enforcement Association (Las Vegas, NV)  
8/30 - West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (White Sulphur Springs, WV)  
9/5 - National Association of State Park Directors and Annual Meeting (Missoula, Montana)  
9/6 - Montana Range Tour (Lewistown, MT)  
9/12 - Conference on Transportation Needs of National Parks and Public Lands (DC)  
9/19-21 - Montana Wood Products Association - Forest Resources Association Convention (Whitefish, MT)  
9/23 - Buffalo Bill Centennial Ball (Cody, Wyoming)  
9/26 - Billings Chamber Annual Mtg (Billings, MT)  
10/1-3 - New Mexico Oil and Gas Association (Santa Fe)  
10/1 - Grand Junction Petroleum & Mining Club (Grand Junction, CO)  
10/4-5 - Montana Equipment Dealers Association (Whitefish, MT)  
10/12 - Natural Areas Association Conference (Fort Collins, CO)

**Emergency Management**

In Idaho, the Powerline Fire has burned 53,076 (+1,062) acres and is 47 (+22)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 468 (+65) personnel, which includes 123 (-3) DOI personnel. There are 20 (no change) residential structures threatened and 150 (no change) evacuees. Native American cultural resources, utility lines, and pipelines remain threatened for the time being; however, additional perimeter growth is not expected, and risks to resources and utilities are expected to diminish greatly in the coming days. Full containment is expected on August 13.

In Oregon, the Spruce Lake Fire in Crater Lake National Park (NPS) has burned 4,681 (no change) acres. The fire is 23 (+4)-percent contained and managed by a Type-2 IMT with 384 (-13) personnel assigned, including 15 (+1) DOI personnel. There are 39 (no change) residential and 13 (no change) commercial structures threatened. Several trails in Crater Lake National Park are closed, including the Pacific Crest Trail. The Park's West Rim Road remains closed, and an evacuation

notice has been issued for the Visitor Center at Rim Village, Park Headquarters, and Mazama Village. Full containment is expected on August 31.

### **Outside Media of Interest**

#### **Uncertainty As National Monument Review Deadline Nears.**

The St. George (UT) Spectrum (8/8, DeMille) reports that “two weeks ahead of a Trump administration deadline to complete a review of 27 national monuments, including Utah’s Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, the status remains uncertain for most of them.” Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has “already issued a preliminary recommendation to shrink the Bears Ears monument, and over the course of the past several weeks he has said that five others should remain monuments and go untouched.” However, “the details behind what might happen at Bears Ears and the fate of the 21 other monuments remain a question mark.”

#### **Sage Grouse Conservation Changes Praised, Provoke Alarm.**

The AP (8/8, Gruver, Brown) reports that the Trump Administration has “opened the door to industry-friendly changes to a sweeping plan imposed by his predecessor to protect a ground-dwelling bird across vast areas of the West.” Representatives of the ranching and energy industries lauded “the policy shift as needed to give states flexibility.” However, wildlife advocates are concerned “that the proposed changes would undercut a hard-won struggle to protect the greater sage grouse.”

#### **Scientist Claims Administration Punishing Him For Speaking Out About Climate Change.**

Chip Reid of the VideoCBS Evening News (8/8, story 5, 2:30, Mason) reported on an interview with US Interior Department scientist Joel Clement about “what happens to a government scientist who speaks up about” climate change. For the past seven years, Clement has been working in Alaskan villages that “are literally melting into the Arctic Ocean.” Clement addressed the issue last month at the UN, and six days later, “he was one of about 50 department employees who were assigned to new jobs.” Clement has filed a whistleblower complaint, saying, “I believe that the Trump Administration is retaliating against me for disclosing these risks to these Alaskan native villages.”

#### **Commentary: Slaughtering Wild Horses Would Be Simplistic And Cruel.**

In an op-ed for the Salt Lake (UT) Tribune (8/9, Hammer), Rob Hammer, the proprietor of Wild Horse Tourist, opposes an amendment to the Interior Department’s 2018 spending bill introduced by Rep. Chris Stewart “that would send thousands of America’s wild horses to slaughterhouses.” Hammer argues that the “proposal to simply slaughter these cherished symbols of our national heritage amounts to greed-driven cruelty and should be stripped from the Appropriations Bill before final Congressional approval.” Instead, Hammer supports “comprehensive approaches that generally include some combination of administering long-acting birth control, retiring grazing leases, increasing lease fees, reapportioning AUM allotments, protecting large predators, returning herd areas to their original acreage and repopulating zeroed areas.”

### **After Trump Warning Of “Fire And Fury,” North Korea Threatens Strike On Guam.**

President Trump’s warning to North Korea, which was followed by Pyongyang threat to strike Guam, are garnering heavy media attention, including the lead reports on all three networks newscasts. Reuters (8/8, Oliphant, Blanchard) reports, warned North Korea it would be met with “fire and fury like the world has never seen.” Stephen Ganyard said on VideoABC World News Tonight (8/8, story 2, 1:15, Muir) that “to hear this language out of a US president, it’s something we have never heard before, and it certainly puts the world on notice.” Media reports cast the developments as presenting Trump with his greatest challenge yet of his presidency, with analysts and commentators taking a decidedly dim view of his rhetoric. The Los Angeles Times (8/8, Hennigan, Cloud, Bierman), for example, reports that the President’s “dramatic threat of annihilation raised fresh fears of a confrontation with North Korea,” and “in many ways mirrors his North Korean counterpart’s,” the New York Times (8/8, Baker, Sang-Hun) refers to “chilling language that evoked the horror of a nuclear exchange,” and a Washington Post (8/8) editorial criticizes the President’s “unsettling threat,” which it calls “reckless and unnecessary. In its bombast, it resembled nothing so much as Kim Jong Un’s regular denunciations of the United States, frantic and hyperbolic.” Dealing with the threat posed by the North, the Post argues, “will require patient pressure and skilled diplomacy, perhaps for years. Instead, Mr. Trump has strut into the arena with a jarring rhetorical grenade.”

### **Federal Register Listings**

No items cleared for the FR on Tuesday.

Doug Domenech  
Senior Advisor  
US Department of the Interior

NOTE: *Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.*

<DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 8-9-17.docx>

**To:** Scott Hommel[scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov]  
**Cc:** Domenech, Douglas[douglas\_domenech@ios.doi.gov]; Magallanes, Downey[downey\_magallanes@ios.doi.gov]; Swift, Heather[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; James Cason[james\_cason@ios.doi.gov]; Micah Chambers[micah\_chambers@ios.doi.gov]; Daniel Jorjani[daniel\_jorjani@ios.doi.gov]; Mashburn, Lori[lori\_mashburn@ios.doi.gov]; Bauserman, Christine[christine\_bauserman@ios.doi.gov]; Caroline Boulton[caroline\_boulton@ios.doi.gov]; Thiele, Aaron[aaron\_thiele@ios.doi.gov]; Willens, Todd[todd\_willens@ios.doi.gov]; Getto, Leila[leila\_getto@ios.doi.gov]; David Bernhardt[(b)(6)]@ios.doi.gov; Russell Newell[russell\_newell@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Laura Rigas  
**Sent:** 2017-08-09T20:05:07-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: Interior Cabinet Affairs Report for 8/9/17  
**Received:** 2017-08-09T20:06:12-04:00

Congrats!! #GoTeam

Laura Keehner Rigas  
Communications Director  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
(202) 897-7022 cell  
@Interior

On Aug 9, 2017, at 5:59 PM, Scott Hommel <[scott\\_hommel@ios.doi.gov](mailto:scott_hommel@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

#1. Awesome team.

Scott C. Hommel  
Chief of Staff  
Department of the Interior

On Aug 9, 2017, at 2:06 PM, Domenech, Douglas <[douglas\\_domenech@ios.doi.gov](mailto:douglas_domenech@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Attached and copied below.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR DAILY UPDATE FOR  
CABINET AFFAIRS – 8/9/17**

Doug Domenech, Senior Advisor  
Lori Mashburn, White House Liaison

VOTED BEST REPORT! ☺

NOTE: Both Domenech and Mashburn will be on leave August 14-18.

NOTE: DOI is gathering emergency management information for

the Territory of Guam in light of comments from the President of North Korea. There are 58 DOI personnel located on the combination of Guam and Saipan. DOI personnel, where not assigned specific actions/activities according to local emergency procedures pertinent to their assigned duties, act in accordance with local government direction. There are no known emergency action plans specific to DOI activities in the area with respect to a threat such as nuclear attack.

#### **Status of the Secretary**

TODAY: The Secretary will be on personal leave August 5-19 out of the country. (Greece and Turkey)

#### **Status of the Deputy Secretary**

In Washington, DC.  
Office meetings and briefings.

#### **Media TODAY**

#### **GRAZING TO CONTINUE ON PARTS OF CRATERS OF THE MOON - DECISION ADVANCES TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S SUPPORT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

WASHINGTON – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today announced that livestock grazing will continue on BLM-managed portions of the Craters of the Moon National Monument in Idaho. The decision demonstrates the Trump Administration's effort to support traditional uses such as grazing on public lands while providing opportunities for recreation and promoting conservation.

“By working together with our stakeholders, we can strike a balance of various uses in this iconic national monument while also serving the greater community,” said BLM Acting Director Michael Nedd. “Our multiple-use mission helps ensure that public lands—including Craters of the Moon—work for local communities and visitors alike.”

#### **SECRETARY ZINKE EXPANDS HUNTING AND FISHING OPPORTUNITIES AT 10 NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES**

(WASHINGTON) In his latest effort to increase access to hunting and fishing on public lands and waters, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke today announced a proposal to open or expand opportunities at 10 national wildlife refuges. If finalized, this would bring the number of refuges where the public may hunt up to 373, and up to 312 where fishing would be permitted.

“I grew up in the mountains of northwest Montana, where I spent my time hunting and fishing on our shared public lands. I was lucky to take my boys out on the same land that my dad and granddad took me,” said Secretary Zinke. “As the steward of our public lands, one of my top priorities is to open up access wherever possible for hunting and fishing so that more families have the opportunity to pass down the heritage. The last thing I want to see is hunting and fishing become elite sports. These ten refuges will provide incredible opportunities for sportsmen and anglers across the country to access the land and connect with the wildlife.”

### **SECRETARY ZINKE MOVES TO ACCEPT 3,595 ACRES OF WILDERNESS FOR SPORTSMEN'S ACCESS TO SABINOSO WILDERNESS AREA IN NEW MEXICO**

WASHINGTON – Following a trip to New Mexico, Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke today announced he and the Department - through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - are in the process of accepting the donation of 3,595 acres (formerly known as the Rimrock Rose Ranch) that are adjacent to Sabinoso Wilderness to be included as part of the wilderness.

If approved, the donated land will provide public access to the 16,000-acre Sabinoso Wilderness, which is wholly surrounded by private land. By adding the donated land, the Sabinoso will connect with neighboring BLM land and make the Sabinoso accessible to the public for the first time ever.

### **White House Report (Yesterday)**

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- August 14: Local Reclamation Release: Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact

Report (EIS/EIR) on the Sites Reservoir Project. The project is a proposed above-ground water storage facility off-stream of the Sacramento River near the town of Maxwell. There will be a comment period and two public meetings are tentatively scheduled—September 26 in Maxwell and September 28 in Sacramento.

- August 15: Local Reclamation Release: Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) on the San Luis Low Point Improvement Project. The project would address water supply reliability and schedule certainty issues associated with low water levels in San Luis Reservoir and help maintain a high-quality, reliable, and cost-effective water supply for Santa Clara Valley Water District, and ensure the district receives their annual Central Valley Project contract allocations at the time and at the level of quality needed to meet their existing water supply commitments. A comment period and two public meetings are tentatively scheduled—August 30 in San Jose and August 31 in Sacramento.
- August 17: National Reclamation Release: August 17, the FAA will release new restrictions for unmanned aerial systems (UAS or drones) with regard to five national critical infrastructure-designated dams; Grand Coulee in Washington, Shasta and Folsom in California, Glen Canyon in Arizona, and Hoover in Nevada/Arizona. Reclamation will send a news release on August 17. The FAA will begin advance notifications on their website and social media beginning August 9.

#### **Bureau of Ocean Energy Management**

- August 10: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will send a note to stakeholders regarding the draft EIS for G&G Activities in GOM.
- August 11: National BOEM Release: Alaska Press Release on Draft EIS for Liberty DPP.
- August 16: National BOEM Release: BOEM will issue release on Gulf Sale 249.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will send a note to stakeholders announcing environmental study reports posted to ESPIS from April-June.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: Note to Stakeholders on Information Transfer Meeting to be held in New Orleans August 22-24.
- TBD: BOEM Note to Stakeholders: BOEM will issue Note to Stakeholders on Draft Guidelines for the Use of Design Envelopes for Offshore Wind Energy Facilities.
- TBD: National BOEM Release: BOEM release on Marine Minerals Rule. The rule is finalized and in surnaming.

#### **Office of Wildland Fire**

- August TBD: OWF anticipates releasing the Preparedness Level 5 "Moses" Letter from the Secretary, with NIFC releasing the Press Release if and when we go to PL 5. We are still holding at PL 4.

-  
**CONGRESSIONAL**

Nothing Scheduled.

-  
**Political Appointee Update**

DOI politicals on board = 51

5 nominated awaiting confirmation:

Pending Senate floor vote: Susan Combs, Assistant Secretary Policy Management and Budget.

Pending Senate floor vote: Brenda Berman, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation.

Pending Senate floor vote: Doug Domenech, Assistant Secretary Insular Areas.

Pending Senate Committee Hearing 9/7: Joe Balash, Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management.

Pending Senate Committee Hearing 9/7: Ryan Douglas Nelson, Solicitor.

**Secretary Speaking Invitations**

**Accepted**

8/5-20 - Personal

9/13 - Congressional Sportsmen Foundation reception (DC)

9/20-21 - Gala and Ribbon Cutting for the Wonders of Wildlife Museum and Aquarium at the Bass Pro HQ (Springfield, MO)

**Outstanding Invitations in Process**

8/25-26 - Steamboat Institute's 9th Annual Freedom Conference & Festival (Steamboat Springs, CO)

9/8 - San Antonio Missions 2017 World Heritage Festival Luncheon

9/6/17 - Edison Electric Institute Board of Directors Conference (Colorado Springs, CO)

9/10-13 - Annual Mtg of the Assoc of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Snowbird, UT)

9/12 - Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative Annual Meeting (St. Louis, MO)

9/17 - 150th Anniversary for the Antietam National Cemetery (Antietam)

9/22-24 - NRA Women's Leadership Forum Summit (Dallas, TX)

9/23 - National Mining Hall of Fame (Denver, CO)

9/23 - Southern Illinois Hunting & Fishing Days Inc. (Carterville, IL)

9/26 - GAO for international conference on extractive industries (DC)

9/26 - S&P Annual Asia Pacific Petroleum Conference (Singapore)

9/27-28 - Cohen Veterans Care Summit (DC)

9/28-30 - Council for National Policy  
Open - Jeffersons Islands Club Citizen of the Year Award (DC)  
open - Americans for Tax Reform (DC)  
Open - Weyrich Lunch (DC)  
Open - Detroit Economic Club

Declining

8/8-12 - American Legion Northwest Regional Baseball Tournament (Missoula, MT)  
8/14-17 - Enercom Conference (Denver, CO)  
8/17 - Mineral Hill Conservation Project (Gardiner, MT)  
8/18 - Council of State Governments-West State and Federal Relations Committee (Tacoma, WA)  
8/21 - Gage County Tourism and Beatrice Chamber of Commerce (Beatrice, NE)  
8/22 - Lake Tahoe Summit (Lake Tahoe, CA)  
8/22-24 - National Native American Law Enforcement Association (Las Vegas, NV)  
8/30 - West Virginia Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting (White Sulphur Springs, WV)  
9/5 - National Association of State Park Directors and Annual Meeting (Missoula, Montana)  
9/6 - Montana Range Tour (Lewistown, MT)  
9/12 - Conference on Transportation Needs of National Parks and Public Lands (DC)  
9/19-21 - Montana Wood Products Association - Forest Resources Association Convention (Whitefish, MT)  
9/23 - Buffalo Bill Centennial Ball (Cody, Wyoming)  
9/26 - Billings Chamber Annual Mtg (Billings, MT)  
10/1-3 - New Mexico Oil and Gas Association (Santa Fe)  
10/1 - Grand Junction Petroleum & Mining Club (Grand Junction, CO)  
10/4-5 - Montana Equipment Dealers Association (Whitefish, MT)  
10/12 - Natural Areas Association Conference (Fort Collins, CO)

Emergency Management

In Idaho, the Powerline Fire has burned 53,076 (+1,062) acres and is 47 (+22)-percent contained. The fire is managed by a Type-2 Incident Management Team (IMT) with 468 (+65) personnel, which includes 123 (-3) DOI personnel. There are 20 (no change) residential structures threatened and 150 (no change) evacuees. Native American cultural resources, utility lines, and pipelines remain threatened for the time being; however, additional perimeter growth is not expected, and risks to resources and utilities are expected to diminish greatly in the coming days. Full containment is expected on August 13.

In Oregon, the Spruce Lake Fire in Crater Lake National Park (NPS) has burned 4,681 (no change) acres. The fire is 23 (+4)-percent contained and managed by a Type-2 IMT with 384 (-13) personnel assigned, including 15 (+1) DOI personnel. There are 39 (no change) residential and 13 (no change) commercial structures threatened. Several trails in Crater Lake National Park are closed, including the Pacific Crest Trail. The Park's West Rim Road remains closed, and an evacuation notice has been issued for the Visitor Center at Rim Village, Park Headquarters, and Mazama Village. Full containment is expected on August 31.

### **Outside Media of Interest**

#### **Uncertainty As National Monument Review Deadline Nears.**

The St. George (UT) Spectrum (8/8, DeMille) reports that "two weeks ahead of a Trump administration deadline to complete a review of 27 national monuments, including Utah's Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante, the status remains uncertain for most of them." Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has "already issued a preliminary recommendation to shrink the Bears Ears monument, and over the course of the past several weeks he has said that five others should remain monuments and go untouched." However, "the details behind what might happen at Bears Ears and the fate of the 21 other monuments remain a question mark."

#### **Sage Grouse Conservation Changes Praised, Provoke Alarm.**

The AP (8/8, Gruver, Brown) reports that the Trump Administration has "opened the door to industry-friendly changes to a sweeping plan imposed by his predecessor to protect a ground-dwelling bird across vast areas of the West." Representatives of the ranching and energy industries lauded "the policy shift as needed to give states flexibility." However, wildlife advocates are concerned "that the proposed changes would undercut a hard-won struggle to protect the greater sage grouse."

#### **Scientist Claims Administration Punishing Him For Speaking Out About Climate Change.**

Chip Reid of the VideoCBS Evening News (8/8, story 5, 2:30, Mason) reported on an interview with US Interior Department scientist Joel Clement about "what happens to a government scientist who speaks up about" climate change. For the past seven years, Clement has been working in Alaskan villages that "are literally melting into the Arctic Ocean." Clement addressed the issue last month at the UN, and six days later, "he was one of about 50 department employees who were assigned to new jobs." Clement has filed a whistleblower complaint, saying, "I believe that the Trump Administration is retaliating against me for disclosing these risks to these Alaskan native villages."

### **Commentary: Slaughtering Wild Horses Would Be Simplistic And Cruel.**

In an op-ed for the Salt Lake (UT) Tribune (8/9, Hammer), Rob Hammer, the proprietor of Wild Horse Tourist, opposes an amendment to the Interior Department's 2018 spending bill introduced by Rep. Chris Stewart "that would send thousands of America's wild horses to slaughterhouses." Hammer argues that the "proposal to simply slaughter these cherished symbols of our national heritage amounts to greed-driven cruelty and should be stripped from the Appropriations Bill before final Congressional approval." Instead, Hammer supports "comprehensive approaches that generally include some combination of administering long-acting birth control, retiring grazing leases, increasing lease fees, reapportioning AUM allotments, protecting large predators, returning herd areas to their original acreage and repopulating zeroed areas."

### **After Trump Warning Of "Fire And Fury," North Korea Threatens Strike On Guam.**

President Trump's warning to North Korea, which was followed by Pyongyang threat to strike Guam, are garnering heavy media attention, including the lead reports on all three networks newscasts. Reuters (8/8, Oliphant, Blanchard) reports, warned North Korea it would be met with "fire and fury like the world has never seen." Stephen Ganyard said on VideoABC World News Tonight (8/8, story 2, 1:15, Muir) that "to hear this language out of a US president, it's something we have never heard before, and it certainly puts the world on notice." Media reports cast the developments as presenting Trump with his greatest challenge yet of his presidency, with analysts and commentators taking a decidedly dim view of his rhetoric. The Los Angeles Times (8/8, Hennigan, Cloud, Bierman), for example, reports that the President's "dramatic threat of annihilation raised fresh fears of a confrontation with North Korea," and "in many ways mirrors his North Korean counterpart's," the New York Times (8/8, Baker, Sang-Hun) refers to "chilling language that evoked the horror of a nuclear exchange," and a Washington Post (8/8) editorial criticizes the President's "unsettling threat," which it calls "reckless and unnecessary. In its bombast, it resembled nothing so much as Kim Jong Un's regular denunciations of the United States, frantic and hyperbolic." Dealing with the threat posed by the North, the Post argues, "will require patient pressure and skilled diplomacy, perhaps for years. Instead, Mr. Trump has strut into the arena with a jarring rhetorical grenade."

### **Federal Register Listings**

No items cleared for the FR on Tuesday.



Doug Domenech  
Senior Advisor  
US Department of the Interior

NOTE: *Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.*

<DOI DAILY UPDATE FOR CABINET AFFAIRS 8-9-17.docx>

**From:** Hinson, Alex  
**Sent:** 2017-08-10T16:25:56-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** \*News Alert\* Republicans making progress on longtime goal for more local control of federal lands  
**Received:** 2017-08-10T16:32:49-04:00

**USA TODAY: Republicans making progress on longtime goal for more local control of federal lands**

**Bartholomew Sullivan**  
**August 10, 2017**

**WASHINGTON** — As the new Republican-dominated House convened in early January, anticipating the arrival of President Trump, the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee declared it time for a "paradigm shift" in how the more than 25% of the country that is owned by the federal government is managed.

Almost eight months into an all-Republican-led effort, it's clear that shift is under way.

It started almost immediately. On the first day of the new Congress, Republicans passed a rule that made it easier to make conveyances of federal land by treating such transfers as cost-free even if they would potentially cause losses of revenue from mining or drilling rights.

Days after Trump took office, then-congressman Jason Chaffetz of Utah introduced legislation to dispose of 3.3 million acres of public land in 10 Western states. After irate calls and protests, he withdrew the bill days later.

In March, the new Interior secretary, Ryan Zinke, repealed a January 2016 moratorium on new coal leases on federal land by the Bureau of Land Management before a planned three-year environmental assessment — that would have looked into "the social cost of carbon" — could be completed. In April, the president asked Zinke to study the size of national monuments made since 1996 by presidential fiat under the Antiquities Act. The review was in the context of a new policy of "energy dominance" and the planned acceleration of resource extraction from public lands.

In June, Zinke, a former Montana congressman and Navy Seal, said the department would postpone elements of the methane rule that requires energy companies to capture the natural gas on public lands rather than flaring it off, the standard industry practice.

In a mid-July meeting with Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, Zinke said he planned to implement the energy dominance Trump has called for by requiring his department to reach faster decisions on leases and permits on federal land, and becoming a partner with extraction industries rather than an adversary. Mulvaney said Interior was "leading the way" in the kinds of deregulation Trump advocates.

More: Ryan Zinke at Interior is implementing MAGAnomics

Zinke's views on the evolving Republican House public lands strategy are complicated. He says he wants to be a good steward and opposes turning over federal land to local or state governments or private interests. His justification for delaying full implementation of the methane rule wasn't so much that it is bad public policy, since it would stop wasting a public resource that could generate revenue, but balancing that goal with the cost to the industry.

While raising revenue from public lands seems in tune with the goals of House Republicans such as Natural Resources Chairman Rob Bishop of Utah, Zinke is not entirely on board with all their agenda. When Republicans convened their national convention in Cleveland last summer, the platform committee agreed to a policy of providing "an orderly mechanism requiring the federal government to convey certain federally controlled lands to the states." Zinke, a member of the committee who disagreed with the policy statement, walked out.

Zinke told senators at his confirmation hearing, and in several public appearances since, that one of his heroes is Theodore Roosevelt, the Republican president who doubled the number of national parks and signed the 1906 Antiquities Act. At a White House roundtable with reporters in July, Zinke talked of lessons learned from John Wesley Powell, who surveyed the West with the U.S. Geological Survey in the late 1890s, and Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service from 1905 to 1910.

It's clear that this Interior secretary, comfortable making the rounds in wrinkled jeans and a cowboy hat, is steeped in the history of his department but also devoted to the mission to make the country's natural resources pay. Unlike Ronald Reagan's lightning rod of an Interior secretary, James G. Watt, who resigned after two years in 1983 following showdowns with Congress over coal mining and offshore oil drilling, Zinke appears to favor diplomacy. As Zinke travels the country looking at national monuments and parks, back in the massive C Street Interior Department Udall Building headquarters, his pinstriped deputy, sworn in Aug. 1, is David L. Bernhardt. Bernhardt is an oil and gas lobbyist and lawyer whose clients have included Halliburton Energy Services, the company once run by former vice president Dick Cheney; Rosemont Copper Co., which is seeking a permit to mine in Arizona; and Cadiz Inc., which is seeking access to the aquifer water under the Mojave Desert, according to the environmental activist group Greenpeace's "Polluter Watch" project.

Also on staff is associate deputy secretary James Cason, who notified several members of the senior executive staff in June that they were being reassigned. One, director of policy analysis Joel Clement, the department's specialist on arctic climate change, was reassigned to an office handling oil lease royalty payments. He wrote a Washington Post op-ed saying he was being retaliated against and that the transfer was intended to make him quit. Cason held Interior jobs under George W. Bush and was involved in minerals management under Ronald Reagan.

After learning of the reassignments, Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., and seven other Democratic senators wrote to the Interior Department's inspector general, saying that the suggestion that the executives were moved to silence or "punish them for the conscientious performance of their duties is extremely troubling and calls for the closest examination." The senators called the transfers "a serious act of mismanagement" and "an abuse of authority."

Soon after he was named, the department's new principal deputy solicitor, Daniel H. Jorjani, was called as a witness before Bishop's Natural Resources Committee oversight hearing June 28 to examine the impact of "excessive litigation" filed against the department.

While the committee's ranking Democrat, Rep. Raul Grijalva of Arizona, questioned the entire premise of the hearing, Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Calif., sought to discredit environmental activists and those implementing consent decrees.

But McClintock, chairman of the subcommittee on federal lands that had held a June 5 hearing on "burdensome litigation" affecting the U.S. Forest Service, had a more sinister view. "So an objective would be essentially collusion between litigants and ideological zealots in the bureaucracy to achieve a foregone or fore-ordained conclusion by court order that they know they couldn't get by regulation or by law," he suggested. Jorjani said he would not make any assumptions about intentions or characterize parties as zealots.

In his written testimony, Jorjani said settlements can be "useful and beneficial" by saving taxpayer money and are reviewed by federal judges to assure they're entered into in the public interest.

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Later in the same hearing, witness Lois Schiffer, a former general counsel to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, clearly offended at the attacks on the integrity of civil servants, volunteered that in her experience government lawyers take their ethical obligations seriously and "do not collude."

That got the attention of Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., who said a "blanket statement that government lawyers don't collude is a false statement because they're humans" and said Schiffer's assertion was "just flabbergasting."

Attacks on environmental plaintiffs and their attorneys' fees has been a decades-long crusade. Bishop has championed Western land use issues since he was a state legislator in the early 1990s before bringing his cause to Washington. In May, Bishop's committee looked at what it called "executive branch overreach of the Antiquities Act" to make the case for more local approval before designations are made. A 13-page memorandum to the Budget Committee this year contains his case for the proposed "paradigm shift" as well as calling for \$50 million to facilitate conveyances of federal land to state, local and tribal governments.

More: Rob Bishop: Republicans seek 'paradigm shift' in federal land management

Besides diminishing the size of national monuments, Bishop opposes acquiring additional lands until those it manages are put in order. Interior oversees the national parks which have \$12 billion in deferred maintenance.

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"This is just the beginning of the Trump administration's assault on our national monuments," Reah Suh, president of the Natural Resources Defense Council, said of the Bears Ears finding.

Bears Ears is one of 27 national monuments Trump asked to have re-evaluated. Zinke has since taken five off the list, agreeing with environmentalists they should be left as-is, including the Missouri Breaks in his native Montana and a section of the Grand Canyon in northwest Arizona.

The Republican lands policy also calls for a reevaluation of the protections under the Endangered Species Act and a review of policy regarding the sage grouse. The renewed call for reforming the ESA began shortly after November's elections with an attack on Obama administration plans to re-list the lesser prairie chicken as endangered.

Unrelated to issues of endangered species, in July the House Appropriations Committee reviewing the Interior Department's 2018 budget voted to end the prohibition against killing wild horses on public lands.

The effort to assert more local control over federal lands comes at a time of heightened political aggression some liken to the Sagebrush Rebellion of the 1970s and '80s. The push for local control erupted in last year's five-week armed standoff at an Oregon bird sanctuary and, before that, the 2014 armed standoff in Nevada by Cliven Bundy who refused to pay grazing fees for use of federal land. Before he resigned his seat in late June to become a Fox News contributor, Chaffetz introduced a bill to remove Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service rangers from public lands and let local law enforcement patrol them. His rationale: to reduce the conflicts like the ones that led to incidents in Oregon and Nevada.

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Alex Hinson

Deputy Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
C: 202-641-5381

**From:** Hinson, Alex  
**Sent:** 2017-08-10T16:25:56-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** \*News Alert\* Republicans making progress on longtime goal for more local control of federal lands  
**Received:** 2017-08-10T22:02:15-04:00

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**Bartholomew Sullivan**  
**August 10, 2017**

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Alex Hinson

Deputy Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
C: 202-641-5381

**To:** Hinson, Alex[alex\_hinson@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Swift, Heather  
**Sent:** 2017-08-23T15:17:44-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: NPR story on Joel Clement  
**Received:** 2017-08-23T15:18:31-04:00

next time just say below is the statement from the department. Don't want the reporter to deliberate on "what you **can** provide" on matters of litigation and personnel.

-

Heather Swift  
Department of the Interior  
@DOIPressSec  
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On Wed, Aug 23, 2017 at 3:15 PM, Hinson, Alex <[alex\\_hinson@ios.doi.gov](mailto:alex_hinson@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Hey Carrie, below is what I can provide regarding Joel Clement. Thanks!  
**Statement on the whistleblower**

The Department does not comment on ongoing matters such as whistleblower complaints. We look forward to working with the Office of Special Counsel to address any questions they might have about this matter.

**Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

On Wed, Aug 23, 2017 at 2:58 PM, Carrie Johnson <[CJohnson2@npr.org](mailto:CJohnson2@npr.org)> wrote:

Hi there

I'm Carrie Johnson, a reporter at NPR in Washington.

Doing a short story for later this week on Joel Clement, an Interior employee who's been outspoken about his reassignment this year and who has filed a whistleblower complaint with the Office of Special Counsel.

Wondering if Interior can say anything about whether the complaint is valid; the reason for Clement's reassignment; and whether it was done in retaliation for his public airing of views.

My deadline is midday Thursday, 8/24.

Many thanks,  
Carrie Johnson

NPR

[Cjohnson2@npr.org](mailto:Cjohnson2@npr.org)

202-513-2216

--

Alex Hinson

Deputy Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
C: 202-641-5381

**To:** scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov[scott\_hommel@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro  
**Sent:** 2017-09-08T17:13:57-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Interior IG probing Zinke's senior staff reshuffle  
**Received:** 2017-09-08T17:14:30-04:00

By Esther Whieldon

09/08/2017 05:09 PM EDT

The Interior Department's internal watchdog has launched a probe into Secretary Ryan Zinke's June reassignment of a number of senior executive staff, an official told POLITICO today.

The inspector general's office is auditing Zinke's decision to reassign dozens of senior executive service employees, including Joel Clement, who was moved from a managerial position involving climate change issues to a job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies. The office has begun interviewing key agency staff and asked the secretary's office to hand over documents, IG spokeswoman Nancy DiPaolo said.

The audit follows a request in July from Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and seven of her colleagues for Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall to look into the matter.

Depending on what the audit uncovers, it could lead to a broader investigation to determine whether any laws were broken.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** DiPaolo said the IG hopes to wrap up its work within a few months.

*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/agriculture/whiteboard/2017/09/interior-ig-probing-zinkes-senior-staff-reshuffle-092682>

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Arlington, VA, 22209, USA

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**To:** heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** POLITICO Pro Energy  
**Sent:** 2017-09-11T05:44:10-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Morning Energy: Irma batters Florida with massive flooding, electric outages — EPA's climate adaptation work continues — Elliott tapped for PHMSA chief  
**Received:** 2017-09-11T05:44:31-04:00

By Anthony Adragna | 09/11/2017 05:42 AM EDT

**IRMA WALLOPS FLORIDA:** It may take days to fully understand the scale of the damage, but the catastrophic Hurricane Irma hammered Florida throughout Sunday just days after Texas bore the brunt of Hurricane Harvey. Millions of people were without power (latest estimates had around 3.5 million customers without electricity) and Acting Homeland Security Secretary Elaine Duke told the Miami Herald many could be without power for weeks in the storm's aftermath. Florida Power & Light CEO Eric Silagy said in a statement late Sunday that an "extensive rebuild" of Florida's west coast electric grid would leave customers without power for extended periods.

**EPA said ahead of landfall** it had completed rapid assessments of 90 Superfund sites in Florida and would ensure any impacted site would be inspected as soon as it's safe to do so. Sen. Marco Rubio told the Associated Press on Sunday agency officials were "generally positive" about the security of Superfund sites during the hurricane, but "they can't guarantee it 100 percent," he added. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt also allowed three Tampa Electric Company facilities and several Monroe County units to operate without meeting all air pollution controls in an attempt to ensure a steady stream of electricity.

**TIME TO DISCUSS CLIMATE CHANGE?** Bucking prominent Trump administration officials like Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Pruitt, Miami's Republican mayor said Saturday it's "the time" to discuss climate change and what can be done about the problem, The Miami Herald reports. "This is the time to talk about climate change," Mayor Tomás Regalado said. "If this isn't climate change, I don't know what is. This is a truly, truly poster child for what is to come."

**McCain agrees:** Speaking on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday, Sen. John McCain said it was time to sit down and discuss potential solutions. "There [are] things happening with the climate in the world that is unprecedented," he said. "We have to understand that the climate may be changing and we can take common sense measures which will not harm the American people."

**Quotable:** In response to Pruitt's comments that discussing climate change during hurricanes is "insensitive," climate hawk Sen. Brian Schatz tweeted: "Every Senate R except for one voted for Pruitt. The Republican Party is refusing moral and political responsibility for the planet itself."

**IT'S MONDAY EVERYONE!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and 39 states (more than ME would've thought) have had a lawmaker serve as president pro tempore in the Senate. For today: Who is the longest-serving Speaker of the House in U.S. history? Send your tips, energy gossip

and comments to [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**CLIMATE ADAPTATION WORK TRUDGES ON:** Staffers working on climate adaptation at EPA continue those efforts even though the four people working on that matter were moved to different offices a few months ago, Pro's Emily Holden [reports](#). "Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation," said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. "The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues." Even though Pruitt has put many climate change initiatives on ice, Scheraga said EPA is still available to work with state and local leaders who want to prepare for the effects of climate change, including heavy rains, more intense hurricanes and sea-level rise.

**An agency spokesman, Jahan Wilcox**, said the reorganization "occurred in the spring and allowed these four employees to continue their work on climate change adaptation within the Office of Policy," which is run by Samantha Dravis, a top aide to Pruitt. The four work within the Office of Regulatory Planning and Management and the National Center of Environmental Economics.

**MORE EPA AMENDMENTS COMING:** Hurricane Irma prompted House Majority Leader [Kevin McCarthy](#) to scrap votes scheduled for today, but lawmakers will vote on lingering EPA and Interior amendments to an eight-title spending package [H.R. 3354 \(115\)](#) this week. Before breaking last week, votes were ordered on amendments [barring EPA from enforcing](#) its methane rule, [prohibiting the use](#) of the social cost of carbon in regulations, [blocking the closure](#) of any EPA regional offices and [slashing agency appropriation](#) by \$1.87 billion.

**INVESTIGATIONS GALORE!** Confirmation came late Friday that a bunch of Trump administration actions were under review by watchdogs. Among them:

1. **Zinke's call to Alaskans:** GAO said it would issue a legal opinion about Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's calls to Alaska Sens. [Lisa Murkowski](#) and [Dan Sullivan](#) over their Obamacare repeal votes, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#), citing [letters](#) released Friday. Zinke allegedly told both lawmakers that Murkowski's vote against moving ahead on healthcare repeal efforts could negatively impact Alaskan energy goals in the Trump administration.

2. **Interior's staff reshuffle:** Interior's inspector general confirmed it would look into Zinke's June reassignment of a number of senior executive staff, Pro's Esther Whieldon [reports](#). Among of the dozens of staff moves under review is Zinke's decision to transfer Joel Clement from a managerial position involving climate change issues to a job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies.

3. **Hiring practices for political appointees:** GAO has also agreed to look into the hiring practices of various political appointees at EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality, as well as whether those officials are complying with ethics requirements, two senior Environment and Public Works Committee Democrats said Friday. "When an agency can just ignore those rules—and congressional oversight—the result often leads to corruption and scandal," Sens. [Tom Carper](#) and [Sheldon Whitehouse](#), who requested the probe, said in a statement. "We're grateful that GAO will let us know what EPA hasn't."

**AT LONG LAST, PHMSA CHIEF PICKED:** Late Friday night, the White House announced its selection of Howard "Skip" Elliott to run the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Pro Transportation's Tanya Snyder [reports](#). He's a 40-year veteran of the U.S. freight rail industry and currently vice president of public safety, health, environment and security for CSX Transportation in Jacksonville, Fla. Elliott's portfolio includes hazardous materials transportation safety, crisis management, and environmental compliance. He received a lifetime achievement award from the Association of American Railroads for his work on hazardous materials transportation safety.

**ICYMI:** Fears are growing among the solar industry that a forthcoming trade commission ruling — and Trump's increasing frustration with advisers recommending a cautious approach to trade — could result in steep tariffs being set on shipments of solar equipment into the country that could stunt the industry's rapid growth, Pro's Esther Whieldon, Eric Wolff and Andrew Restuccia [report](#). The U.S. International Trade Commission rules later this month on the complaint from solar manufacturers Suniva and SolarWorld USA and, if it finds damage, would send the matter over to the White House for a final decision.

**Key takeaway:** A senior administration official said Trump is very likely to support tariffs against the solar imports if the ITC sends the complaint over to 1600 Pennsylvania.

**Meanwhile,** the sector boasted its largest second quarter ever with 2,387 megawatts of solar photovoltaic systems installed, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association's [latest report](#). That's more than quarter one of 2017 and represents a eight percent year-over-year increase.

**MAIL CALL! REVERSE COURSE ON CLIMATE PREPAREDNESS:** Carper, top EPW Democrat, sent [a letter](#) to Trump Friday urging him to reinstate several previously canceled Obama-era initiatives on climate preparedness. "While our country debates how to address climate change, rising sea levels and extreme weather events are no longer a matter of debate, becoming the new norm and placing extreme burdens on the American people and economy," Carper wrote. Among his requests: Reinstate the requirements that federally funded projects be required to take flood risks under consideration and hold a "red team-blue team" exercise on preparedness rather than climate science.

**EYEING AN EXIT?** Tucked away in a New York Times [report](#) on how Trump's rattling Republicans ahead of the midterms comes the tidbit that Rep. [Fred Upton](#), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, "may retire or run for the Senate." Upton has been one of the most visible faces on energy policy in the House. He later [emailed](#) Jonathan Martin, the Times reporter, to say he was eyeing the Senate seat now held by Sen. [Debbie Stabenow](#). ME can't wait for the Upton v. Kid Rock primary.

**WATCH THIS SPACE:** Wednesday marks the deadline for EPA and environmental challengers to suggest expedited briefing schedules in the lawsuit over Pruitt's delay of the chemical safety rule, Pro's Alex Guillén reports in [Energy Regulation Watch](#). That comes even as the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit declined to immediately reinstate the rule in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. And, ICYMI, Trump picked Gregory Katsas, currently a deputy counsel at the White House, for the open slot of the D.C. Circuit left open recent retirement of



Judge Janice Rogers Brown.

**THIS SEEMS TIMELY:** The National League of Cities and the Environmental and Energy Study Institute are holding [a briefing](#) today at 3 p.m. in Cannon 122 to hear what various cities around the U.S. are doing to invest in resiliency. Speakers include Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto.

**IT'S TIME TO RECTIFY:** Germany's automobile industry must "rectify the mistakes" exposed in its Dieselgate emissions scandal but there's still a robust future for the sector, Chancellor Angela Merkel said in a [podcast](#) Saturday, POLITICO Europe's Kalina Oroschakoff [reports](#). "We've experienced a major loss of trust in the car industry," Merkel said. "But at the same time, we also know that the car industry is an important pillar of our economic success, as well as of our reputation as an export nation, and the quality label 'Made in Germany.'" With just two weeks to go until the German elections, Merkel is trying to walk the fine line of chastising the industry for its failure in the emissions cheating scandal without alienating the hundreds of the thousands of workers in the sector.

**THIS SEEMS LIKE A BIG DEAL:** China has begun the preliminary research into eventually banning the sale of all fossil fuel powered vehicles, the BBC [reports](#). "Those measures will certainly bring profound changes for our car industry's development," Xin Guobin, the country's vice minister of industry, said. China has not said when the ban might go into effect.

## QUICK HITS

- Receding floodwaters expose long-term health risks after Harvey. [Bloomberg](#).
- Troubled Water: EPA, DEP don't require Florida schools to test for lead in drinking water. [Treasure Coast News](#).
- Doddridge case called a boost for surface owners in Marcellus gas region. [Charleston Gazette-Mail](#).
- Residents washed away by Harvey wait for answers about waste pit pollution. [Houston Chronicle](#).
- West Virginia Withdraws Approval of Mountain Valley Pipeline. [AP](#).
- Japan Backs U.S. Proposal to Target North Korea's Oil Supplies. [Bloomberg](#).

## HAPPENING THIS WEEK

### MONDAY

3:00 p.m. — The Environmental and Energy Study Institute holds a discussion on "How Can Cities Become More Resilient to Extreme Weather?" Cannon 122

### TUESDAY

9:00 a.m. — "[The New Geopolitics of Natural Gas](#)," Atlantic Council, 1030 15th Street NW, 12th Floor

10:00 a.m. — "Powering America: Defining Reliability in a Transforming Electricity Industry," House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, Rayburn 2123

10:00 a.m. — "Resiliency: The Electric Grid's Only Hope," House Science, Space and Technology Committee, 2318 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions releases a new brief and hosts a webinar featuring business leaders on how and why companies are putting an internal price on carbon emissions, contact: [press@c2es.org](mailto:press@c2es.org)

2:30 p.m. — "Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act: Oversight of Fisheries Management Successes and Challenges," Senate Commerce Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard Subcommittee, Russell 253

2:30 p.m. — "Fostering Innovation: Contributions of the Department of Energy's National Laboratories," Senate Energy and Natural Resources Energy Subcommittee, Dirksen 366

4:00 p.m. — Full committee marks up various bills, House Natural Resources Committee, 1334 Longworth

## **WEDNESDAY**

8:30 a.m. — API holds an event on the natural gas and oil industry's impact in all 50 states, G11 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "Big Relief for Small Business: Legislation Reducing Regulatory Burdens on Small Manufacturers and Other Job Creators," House Energy and Commerce Environment Subcommittee, Rayburn 2123

10:00 a.m. — The full House Natural Resources Committee holds a markup of pending calendar business, Longworth 1334

10:00 a.m. — "Expanding and Accelerating the Deployment and Use of Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Dirksen 406

11:00 a.m. — National Biodiesel Board holds its BioFry event for congressional staff, 406 1st St. SE

12:00 p.m. — Save the U.S. EPA holds a press conference and march to the EPA, National Press Club, Zenger Room, 529 14th Street N.W., 13th floor

2:30 p.m. — "The Venezuela Crisis: The Malicious Influence of State and Criminal Actors," The House Foreign Affairs Committee Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, 2200 Rayburn

## **THURSDAY**

8:30 a.m. — "State of the Art: Innovations in CO2 Capture and Use," Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, Hart 902

8:30 a.m. — POLITICO Pro policy summit, Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert Street, NW

10:00 a.m. — "[EIA's International Energy Outlook 2017](#)," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

## **FRIDAY**

12:00 p.m. — "[Battery Storage and the Power Sector](#)," National Capital Area Chapter of the United States Association for Energy Economics , Carmine's, 425 7th St NW,

## **THAT'S ALL FOR ME!**

*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/09/irma-batters-florida-with-massive-flooding-electric-outages-024519>

## **Stories from POLITICO Pro**

### **EPA staffer: We're still working on climate adaptation** [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 09/11/2017 05:02 AM EDT

Staff from the EPA's disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO.

An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt.

"Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation," said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. "Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues."

Pruitt has eliminated EPA's initiatives aimed at reducing man-made carbon dioxide emissions in order to curb climate change. He has questioned CO2's role in rising temperatures, proposing the agency should host public debates on the science. He is working to rescind the Clean Power Plan, the Obama administration's key proposal to start decreasing U.S. greenhouse gas levels, and he was a core proponent of exiting the Paris climate agreement.

But Scheraga said EPA is still available to work with state and local leaders who want to prepare for the effects of climate change, including heavy rains, more intense hurricanes and sea-level rise. The news is one of the first signs that Pruitt would allow some climate change efforts to continue.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said the changes "occurred in the spring and allowed these four employees to continue their work on climate change adaptation within the office of policy." The

staffers will work within the Office of Regulatory Planning and Management and the National Center of Environmental Economics.

Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example.

"We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs," Scheraga said. "They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water."

That kind of work will be important as Texas and Florida rebuild following two of the most damaging hurricanes in U.S. history.

Congress is moving ahead with an initial \$15 billion aid package for Texas and Louisiana, and scientists say addressing the role of a changing climate is crucial to spending that money effectively.

Fred Wagner, a lawyer who counseled the city of New Orleans in rebuilding its downtown medical center after Hurricane Katrina, said communities that want to spend more to rebuild smarter, with bigger and more frequent flooding in mind, will need to be able to point to climate change, even if they just call it "resiliency."

"It makes justifying the investment in those features much more acceptable, much more palatable," he said.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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## **GAO to probe Zinke call to Murkowski [Back](#)**

By Alex Guillén | 09/08/2017 05:12 PM EDT

The Government Accountability Office will look into Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's calls to Alaska Sens. [Lisa Murkowski](#) and [Dan Sullivan](#) over Obamacare repeal, according to [letters](#) sent today.

Two key House Democrats, Reps. [Frank Pallone](#) and [Raul Grijalva](#), asked GAO to provide a legal opinion on the July calls, during which Zinke reportedly told Murkowski that her vote against moving forward with repeal efforts could negatively impact Alaskan energy goals in the Trump administration.

Interior's inspector general already [concluded](#) its own inquiry into the matter without making any findings after both senators declined to discuss the calls with investigators.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** GAO's letter does not specify how long the inquiry might take.

*To view online [click here](#).*

[Back](#)

### **Interior IG probing Zinke's senior staff reshuffle** [Back](#)

By Esther Whieldon | 09/08/2017 05:09 PM EDT

The Interior Department's internal watchdog has launched a probe into Secretary Ryan Zinke's June reassignment of a number of senior executive staff, an official told POLITICO today.

The inspector general's office is auditing Zinke's decision to [reassign](#) dozens of senior executive service employees, including Joel Clement, who was moved from a managerial position involving climate change issues to a job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies. The office has begun interviewing key agency staff and asked the secretary's office to hand over documents, IG spokeswoman Nancy DiPaolo said.

The audit follows a [request](#) in July from Sen. [Maria Cantwell](#) (D-Wash.) and seven of her colleagues for Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall to look into the matter.

Depending on what the audit uncovers, it could lead to a broader investigation to determine whether any laws were broken.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** DiPaolo said the IG hopes to wrap up its work within a few months.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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### **White House to nominate heads for FHWA, PHMSA** [Back](#)

By Tanya Snyder | 09/08/2017 08:20 PM EDT

President Donald Trump announced tonight that he will nominate Paul Trombino to head the Federal Highway Administration and Howard "Skip" Elliott to run the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

Trombino was director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011 to 2016. He unexpectedly resigned from his post in Iowa last November and in December became president of the McClure Engineering Company, a civil engineering firm.

Before his stint in Iowa, Trombino worked at the Wisconsin DOT for 17 years, most recently serving as director of the Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Rails and Harbors.

Trombino served as president of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials for the 2015-2016 term and as the 2016 vice chair of the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee.

Trump also tapped Howard "Skip" Elliott, an award-winning 40-year veteran of the U.S. freight rail industry, for administrator of PHMSA. Elliott is vice president of public safety, health, environment and security for CSX Transportation in Jacksonville, Fla., with a portfolio that included hazardous materials transportation safety, crisis management, and environmental compliance.

According to the White House, Elliott "is a pioneer and leading advocate in developing and implementing computer-based tools to assist emergency management officials, first responders, and homeland security personnel in preparing for and responding to a railroad hazardous materials or security incident."

Elliott received a lifetime achievement award from the Association of American Railroads for his work on hazardous materials transportation safety.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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### **Solar sector rattled by trade case, Trump rhetoric [Back](#)**

By Esther Whieldon, Eric Wolff and Andrew Restuccia | 09/08/2017 05:03 PM EDT

A looming trade commission ruling on the surging imports of solar equipment to the U.S. and President Donald Trump's impatience on creating trade barriers are raising fears among many in the solar industry they could see a tariff that stunts the sector's sharp growth.

The U.S. International Trade Commission will decide later this month whether foreign companies are harming U.S. solar cell makers with their shipments of solar equipment into the country. And if it does find damage, it would recommend a remedy — and ultimately hand the final decision off to Trump to decide whether to impose tariffs.

The complaint filed by solar manufacturers Suniva and SolarWorld USA to the ITC only needs to show that surging imports harmed the domestic industry, which appears to be backed up by data showing a five-fold increase in imports from 2012 to 2016 and the closure of more than half the U.S. cell manufacturing sites over that period.

Trump has frequently complained that U.S. companies were suffering from unfair competition from foreign countries — particularly China, whose companies dominate solar manufacturing — and he is very likely to support tariffs against the solar imports if the ITC sends the complaint to the White House, according to a senior administration official.

The official said the president is increasingly frustrated with advisers recommending a cautious approach to trade.

But many in the U.S. solar business say that setting up tariffs or floor prices for imports, as Suniva has suggested, could pose some political risks for Trump because of solar technology's broad popularity, as well the growing clout of the workforce that sells and installs the systems.

The politics of this "might get wrapped up in Trump's desire to beat his chest," said Jigar Shah, founder of solar installer SunEdison now at specialty finance company Generate Capital, and who opposes tariffs. "These are all the people that basically thought that the U.S. economy had left them behind and voted for Trump. This is a policy that would directly negatively impact Trump's base."

Solar power costs have tumbled to less than a quarter of the price a decade ago, largely because of declines in the prices of cells and panels driven by low-cost production from Chinese companies. That has helped spur a surge in both large-utility scale installations as well as small rooftop systems for homeowners and businesses.

Opponents of trade barriers, including the industry lobby group Solar Energy Industry Association, contend that using the authority that was last applied by President George W. Bush would drive up the price of solar panels and eliminate 88,000 jobs, a third of the industry's U.S. workers.

Many of those jobs are in states Trump won narrowly in 2016: North Carolina, Arizona and Florida, which are all among the top 10 in the country in solar jobs, according to a report from the advocacy group The Solar Foundation.

But supporters of tariffs — including the Steel Manufacturers Association — are pressing Trump to put in place barriers to stem the flow of cheap solar cells and modules that have pushed many U.S. manufacturers — including Suniva — into bankruptcy. Suniva and SolarWorld contend that resurrecting the U.S. solar manufacturing sector would generate about 16,000 manufacturing jobs "in very short order" and increase overall related employment by about 45,500 jobs.

"The U.S. solar manufacturing industry must be provided meaningful relief to ensure that thousands of American manufacturing jobs are not permanently exported overseas," Suniva and SolarWorld said in an emailed statement.

They added that "Any criticism of a remedy is a vote for sending American manufacturing jobs to China and its proxies."

The ITC decision on whether the imports harmed U.S. manufacturers is due Sept. 22. If it finds harm, it would send its recommendations to the White House in November, and a final decision from Trump would be expected after the beginning of the new year.

Trump could face pushback from lawmakers if his big trade decisions hurt their constituents, said Tori Whiting of The Heritage Foundation, noting the political and international pressure that prompted Bush to pull back tariffs on steel imports less than two years after he imposed them in 2002.

And new tariffs could ultimately spur Congress to jump into the issue, she said.

"Congress has given up a lot of its authority when it comes to decisions made on trade and on the changing on barriers and tariffs," Whiting said. A strong move by the White House on solar or steel imports "could motivate Congress to ... reassert their constitutional powers."

Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) in January introduced a bill, S. 177 (115), that would subject all of a president's trade actions to congressional approval with exceptions regarding protecting national security.

So far, more than 70 lawmakers from both parties have weighed in on the case in letters to the trade commission, with the majority pushing for the ITC to not impose new solar tariffs.

But most lawmakers from states that are home to Suniva and SolarWorld factories in Oregon, Michigan and Georgia say they back the manufacturers' petition, including Reps. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.) and Dan Kildee (D-Mich.).

"China is illegally dumping below-cost solar panels on the marketplace. They've been doing it for years," Schrader said, noting that SolarWorld won anti-dumping and countervailing duty sanctions against Chinese and Taiwanese-made solar products in 2012 and 2015. But those measures had little impact, since Chinese companies shifted much of their production to other Asian nations not covered by the duties.

Kildee told POLITICO he viewed the issue as "really a question as to whether we're going to abdicate manufacturing to other places around the world."

But Sen. David Perdue's (R-Ga.) August letter, co-signed by 15 other senators, argued that the proposed "tariffs would especially hurt residential rooftop solar projects that are rapidly growing." Solar installers comprised more than half of Georgia's 4,000-person solar workforce in 2016 about 2-1/2 times the number employed in solar manufacturing jobs there.

Both of Suniva's Georgia and Michigan factories are shuttered after the company sought bankruptcy protection.

The issue is further complicated over exactly who the tariffs would protect, since Suniva and SolarWorld USA have foreign owners. American financiers pushed Suniva to file the trade case, but Shunfeng International Clean Energy Ltd. owns a majority stake in the company. While SolarWorld USA is an arm of Germany's SolarWorld Industries.

"These are foreign multi-nationals but they have manufacturing in the U.S., That's the distinction. And you have domestic companies addicted to foreign imports," said Robert Scott, a senior economist with the Economic Policy Institute. "That seems awkward, and that's one of the reasons I suspect that Trump may be hesitant to act in this case. There are no clear domestic interests at stake and there are now increasingly clear domestic enterprises who could lose."

Still, Trump has re-opened the NAFTA free trade deal with Canada and Mexico in search of a revamp more to his liking, and has taken a protectionist posture in an attempt to reverse various other trade agreements, complaining they are "bad deals" that hurt American workers. The solar case could present him with an opportunity to show he's following through on his get-tough pledges. He regularly calls out other countries — even tiny Finland — for having a trade surplus with the United States, and he has put trade hawks like Peter Navarro and Robert Lighthizer in key administration posts.

At a meeting in the Oval Office earlier in August Trump told chief of staff John Kelly, "This is



my view. I want tariffs. And I want someone to bring me some tariffs," Axios reported.

If the commission sends the case to Trump in November, he would not be limited by the agency's recommendations and could even try to negotiate a deal with other countries to avoid angering allies he needs to keep on his side for bigger fights.

"I think it's catnip to the base and irresistible to the president," said Paul Bledsoe, a strategic advisor at the Progressive Policy Institute, a left-leaning policy think tank. "I see very little downside to him acting on it. I think it's a classic kind of far right conservative argument: 'Isn't it ironic the lefties don't even protect their own solar manufacturers,' kind of thing."

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**Subject:** Morning Energy: Irma batters Florida with massive flooding, electric outages — EPA's climate adaptation work continues — Elliott tapped for PHMSA chief  
**Received:** 2017-09-11T05:44:33-04:00

By Anthony Adragna | 09/11/2017 05:42 AM EDT

**IRMA WALLOPS FLORIDA:** It may take days to fully understand the scale of the damage, but the catastrophic Hurricane Irma hammered Florida throughout Sunday just days after Texas bore the brunt of Hurricane Harvey. Millions of people were without power (latest estimates had around 3.5 million customers without electricity) and Acting Homeland Security Secretary Elaine Duke told the Miami Herald many could be without power for weeks in the storm's aftermath. Florida Power & Light CEO Eric Silagy said in a statement late Sunday that an "extensive rebuild" of Florida's west coast electric grid would leave customers without power for extended periods.

**EPA said ahead of landfall** it had completed rapid assessments of 90 Superfund sites in Florida and would ensure any impacted site would be inspected as soon as it's safe to do so. Sen. Marco Rubio told the Associated Press on Sunday agency officials were "generally positive" about the security of Superfund sites during the hurricane, but "they can't guarantee it 100 percent," he added. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt also allowed three Tampa Electric Company facilities and several Monroe County units to operate without meeting all air pollution controls in an attempt to ensure a steady stream of electricity.

**TIME TO DISCUSS CLIMATE CHANGE?** Bucking prominent Trump administration officials like Energy Secretary Rick Perry and Pruitt, Miami's Republican mayor said Saturday it's "the time" to discuss climate change and what can be done about the problem, The Miami Herald reports. "This is the time to talk about climate change," Mayor Tomás Regalado said. "If this isn't climate change, I don't know what is. This is a truly, truly poster child for what is to come."

**McCain agrees:** Speaking on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday, Sen. John McCain said it was time to sit down and discuss potential solutions. "There [are] things happening with the climate in the world that is unprecedented," he said. "We have to understand that the climate may be changing and we can take common sense measures which will not harm the American people."

**Quotable:** In response to Pruitt's comments that discussing climate change during hurricanes is "insensitive," climate hawk Sen. Brian Schatz tweeted: "Every Senate R except for one voted for Pruitt. The Republican Party is refusing moral and political responsibility for the planet itself."

**IT'S MONDAY EVERYONE!** I'm your host Anthony Adragna, and 39 states (more than ME would've thought) have had a lawmaker serve as president pro tempore in the Senate. For today: Who is the longest-serving Speaker of the House in U.S. history? Send your tips, energy gossip

and comments to [aadragna@politico.com](mailto:aadragna@politico.com), or follow us on Twitter [@AnthonyAdragna](https://twitter.com/AnthonyAdragna), [@Morning\\_Energy](https://twitter.com/Morning_Energy) and [@POLITICOPro](https://twitter.com/POLITICOPro).

**CLIMATE ADAPTATION WORK TRUDGES ON:** Staffers working on climate adaptation at EPA continue those efforts even though the four people working on that matter were moved to different offices a few months ago, Pro's Emily Holden [reports](#). "Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation," said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. "The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues." Even though Pruitt has put many climate change initiatives on ice, Scheraga said EPA is still available to work with state and local leaders who want to prepare for the effects of climate change, including heavy rains, more intense hurricanes and sea-level rise.

**An agency spokesman, Jahan Wilcox**, said the reorganization "occurred in the spring and allowed these four employees to continue their work on climate change adaptation within the Office of Policy," which is run by Samantha Dravis, a top aide to Pruitt. The four work within the Office of Regulatory Planning and Management and the National Center of Environmental Economics.

**MORE EPA AMENDMENTS COMING:** Hurricane Irma prompted House Majority Leader [Kevin McCarthy](#) to scrap votes scheduled for today, but lawmakers will vote on lingering EPA and Interior amendments to an eight-title spending package [H.R. 3354 \(115\)](#) this week. Before breaking last week, votes were ordered on amendments [barring EPA from enforcing](#) its methane rule, [prohibiting the use](#) of the social cost of carbon in regulations, [blocking the closure](#) of any EPA regional offices and [slashing agency appropriation](#) by \$1.87 billion.

**INVESTIGATIONS GALORE!** Confirmation came late Friday that a bunch of Trump administration actions were under review by watchdogs. Among them:

1. **Zinke's call to Alaskans:** GAO said it would issue a legal opinion about Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's calls to Alaska Sens. [Lisa Murkowski](#) and [Dan Sullivan](#) over their Obamacare repeal votes, Pro's Alex Guillén [reports](#), citing [letters](#) released Friday. Zinke allegedly told both lawmakers that Murkowski's vote against moving ahead on healthcare repeal efforts could negatively impact Alaskan energy goals in the Trump administration.
2. **Interior's staff reshuffle:** Interior's inspector general confirmed it would look into Zinke's June reassignment of a number of senior executive staff, Pro's Esther Whieldon [reports](#). Among of the dozens of staff moves under review is Zinke's decision to transfer Joel Clement from a managerial position involving climate change issues to a job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies.
3. **Hiring practices for political appointees:** GAO has also agreed to look into the hiring practices of various political appointees at EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality, as well as whether those officials are complying with ethics requirements, two senior Environment and Public Works Committee Democrats said Friday. "When an agency can just ignore those rules—and congressional oversight—the result often leads to corruption and scandal," Sens. [Tom Carper](#) and [Sheldon Whitehouse](#), who requested the probe, said in a statement. "We're grateful that GAO will let us know what EPA hasn't."

**AT LONG LAST, PHMSA CHIEF PICKED:** Late Friday night, the White House announced its selection of Howard "Skip" Elliott to run the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Pro Transportation's Tanya Snyder [reports](#). He's a 40-year veteran of the U.S. freight rail industry and currently vice president of public safety, health, environment and security for CSX Transportation in Jacksonville, Fla. Elliott's portfolio includes hazardous materials transportation safety, crisis management, and environmental compliance. He received a lifetime achievement award from the Association of American Railroads for his work on hazardous materials transportation safety.

**ICYMI:** Fears are growing among the solar industry that a forthcoming trade commission ruling — and Trump's increasing frustration with advisers recommending a cautious approach to trade — could result in steep tariffs being set on shipments of solar equipment into the country that could stunt the industry's rapid growth, Pro's Esther Whieldon, Eric Wolff and Andrew Restuccia [report](#). The U.S. International Trade Commission rules later this month on the complaint from solar manufacturers Suniva and SolarWorld USA and, if it finds damage, would send the matter over to the White House for a final decision.

**Key takeaway:** A senior administration official said Trump is very likely to support tariffs against the solar imports if the ITC sends the complaint over to 1600 Pennsylvania.

**Meanwhile,** the sector boasted its largest second quarter ever with 2,387 megawatts of solar photovoltaic systems installed, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association's [latest report](#). That's more than quarter one of 2017 and represents a eight percent year-over-year increase.

**MAIL CALL! REVERSE COURSE ON CLIMATE PREPAREDNESS:** Carper, top EPW Democrat, sent [a letter](#) to Trump Friday urging him to reinstate several previously canceled Obama-era initiatives on climate preparedness. "While our country debates how to address climate change, rising sea levels and extreme weather events are no longer a matter of debate, becoming the new norm and placing extreme burdens on the American people and economy," Carper wrote. Among his requests: Reinstate the requirements that federally funded projects be required to take flood risks under consideration and hold a "red team-blue team" exercise on preparedness rather than climate science.

**EYEING AN EXIT?** Tucked away in a New York Times [report](#) on how Trump's rattling Republicans ahead of the midterms comes the tidbit that Rep. [Fred Upton](#), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, "may retire or run for the Senate." Upton has been one of the most visible faces on energy policy in the House. He later [emailed](#) Jonathan Martin, the Times reporter, to say he was eyeing the Senate seat now held by Sen. [Debbie Stabenow](#). ME can't wait for the Upton v. Kid Rock primary.

**WATCH THIS SPACE:** Wednesday marks the deadline for EPA and environmental challengers to suggest expedited briefing schedules in the lawsuit over Pruitt's delay of the chemical safety rule, Pro's Alex Guillén reports in [Energy Regulation Watch](#). That comes even as the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit declined to immediately reinstate the rule in the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. And, ICYMI, Trump picked Gregory Katsas, currently a deputy counsel at the White House, for the open slot of the D.C. Circuit left open recent retirement of

Judge Janice Rogers Brown.

**THIS SEEMS TIMELY:** The National League of Cities and the Environmental and Energy Study Institute are holding [a briefing](#) today at 3 p.m. in Cannon 122 to hear what various cities around the U.S. are doing to invest in resiliency. Speakers include Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto.

**IT'S TIME TO RECTIFY:** Germany's automobile industry must "rectify the mistakes" exposed in its Dieselgate emissions scandal but there's still a robust future for the sector, Chancellor Angela Merkel said in a [podcast](#) Saturday, POLITICO Europe's Kalina Oroschakoff [reports](#). "We've experienced a major loss of trust in the car industry," Merkel said. "But at the same time, we also know that the car industry is an important pillar of our economic success, as well as of our reputation as an export nation, and the quality label 'Made in Germany.'" With just two weeks to go until the German elections, Merkel is trying to walk the fine line of chastising the industry for its failure in the emissions cheating scandal without alienating the hundreds of the thousands of workers in the sector.

**THIS SEEMS LIKE A BIG DEAL:** China has begun the preliminary research into eventually banning the sale of all fossil fuel powered vehicles, the BBC [reports](#). "Those measures will certainly bring profound changes for our car industry's development," Xin Guobin, the country's vice minister of industry, said. China has not said when the ban might go into effect.

## QUICK HITS

- Receding floodwaters expose long-term health risks after Harvey. [Bloomberg](#).
- Troubled Water: EPA, DEP don't require Florida schools to test for lead in drinking water. [Treasure Coast News](#).
- Doddridge case called a boost for surface owners in Marcellus gas region. [Charleston Gazette-Mail](#).
- Residents washed away by Harvey wait for answers about waste pit pollution. [Houston Chronicle](#).
- West Virginia Withdraws Approval of Mountain Valley Pipeline. [AP](#).
- Japan Backs U.S. Proposal to Target North Korea's Oil Supplies. [Bloomberg](#).

## HAPPENING THIS WEEK

### MONDAY

3:00 p.m. — The Environmental and Energy Study Institute holds a discussion on "How Can Cities Become More Resilient to Extreme Weather?" Cannon 122

### TUESDAY

9:00 a.m. — "[The New Geopolitics of Natural Gas](#)," Atlantic Council, 1030 15th Street NW, 12th Floor

10:00 a.m. — "Powering America: Defining Reliability in a Transforming Electricity Industry," House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee, Rayburn 2123

10:00 a.m. — "Resiliency: The Electric Grid's Only Hope," House Science, Space and Technology Committee, 2318 Rayburn

10:00 a.m. — The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions releases a new brief and hosts a webinar featuring business leaders on how and why companies are putting an internal price on carbon emissions, contact: [press@c2es.org](mailto:press@c2es.org)

2:30 p.m. — "Reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act: Oversight of Fisheries Management Successes and Challenges," Senate Commerce Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries, and Coast Guard Subcommittee, Russell 253

2:30 p.m. — "Fostering Innovation: Contributions of the Department of Energy's National Laboratories," Senate Energy and Natural Resources Energy Subcommittee, Dirksen 366

4:00 p.m. — Full committee marks up various bills, House Natural Resources Committee, 1334 Longworth

## **WEDNESDAY**

8:30 a.m. — API holds an event on the natural gas and oil industry's impact in all 50 states, G11 Dirksen

10:00 a.m. — "Big Relief for Small Business: Legislation Reducing Regulatory Burdens on Small Manufacturers and Other Job Creators," House Energy and Commerce Environment Subcommittee, Rayburn 2123

10:00 a.m. — The full House Natural Resources Committee holds a markup of pending calendar business, Longworth 1334

10:00 a.m. — "Expanding and Accelerating the Deployment and Use of Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Sequestration," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Dirksen 406

11:00 a.m. — National Biodiesel Board holds its BioFry event for congressional staff, 406 1st St. SE

12:00 p.m. — Save the U.S. EPA holds a press conference and march to the EPA, National Press Club, Zenger Room, 529 14th Street N.W., 13th floor

2:30 p.m. — "The Venezuela Crisis: The Malicious Influence of State and Criminal Actors," The House Foreign Affairs Committee Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, 2200 Rayburn

## **THURSDAY**

8:30 a.m. — "State of the Art: Innovations in CO2 Capture and Use," Center for Climate and Energy Solutions, Hart 902

8:30 a.m. — POLITICO Pro policy summit, Omni Shoreham Hotel, 2500 Calvert Street, NW

10:00 a.m. — "[EIA's International Energy Outlook 2017](#)," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1616 Rhode Island Avenue, NW

## **FRIDAY**

12:00 p.m. — "[Battery Storage and the Power Sector](#)," National Capital Area Chapter of the United States Association for Energy Economics , Carmine's, 425 7th St NW,

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*To view online:*

<https://www.politicopro.com/tipsheets/morning-energy/2017/09/irma-batters-florida-with-massive-flooding-electric-outages-024519>

## **Stories from POLITICO Pro**

### **EPA staffer: We're still working on climate adaptation** [Back](#)

By Emily Holden | 09/11/2017 05:02 AM EDT

Staff from the EPA's disbanded climate adaptation office are still doing the same work despite moving to different offices a few months ago, the head of the team told POLITICO.

An EPA reorganization finalized last week revealed that the agency followed through with a plan set in the spring to reassign four climate change adaptation employees to two different sections of the Office of Policy, which is run by Samantha Dravis, a longtime political strategist and top aide to Administrator Scott Pruitt.

"Unequivocally, the Office of Policy continues to support work on climate adaptation," said Joel Scheraga, a veteran EPA employee and the agency's senior adviser for climate adaptation. "Samantha Dravis has asked me to continue working on climate adaptation issues. The bottom line is that climate adaptation work continues."

Pruitt has eliminated EPA's initiatives aimed at reducing man-made carbon dioxide emissions in order to curb climate change. He has questioned CO2's role in rising temperatures, proposing the agency should host public debates on the science. He is working to rescind the Clean Power Plan, the Obama administration's key proposal to start decreasing U.S. greenhouse gas levels, and he was a core proponent of exiting the Paris climate agreement.

But Scheraga said EPA is still available to work with state and local leaders who want to prepare for the effects of climate change, including heavy rains, more intense hurricanes and sea-level rise. The news is one of the first signs that Pruitt would allow some climate change efforts to continue.

EPA spokesman Jahan Wilcox said the changes "occurred in the spring and allowed these four employees to continue their work on climate change adaptation within the office of policy." The

staffers will work within the Office of Regulatory Planning and Management and the National Center of Environmental Economics.

Scheraga said the agency wants to help make sure that as communities "invest literally billions of dollars in new [water] systems that they in fact are better prepared for these extreme weather events so that they don't overflow so that they don't spill raw sewage into our lakes and streams," for example.

"We work with the communities to provide them with the information and the tools that they have told us they need to address their needs," Scheraga said. "They have told us they need to deal with these more intense precipitation events, these storm surges, so that in fact they can continue to protect public health and the environment, again consistent with EPA's mission to ensure that they continue to protect water quality and can provide safe drinking water."

That kind of work will be important as Texas and Florida rebuild following two of the most damaging hurricanes in U.S. history.

Congress is moving ahead with an initial \$15 billion aid package for Texas and Louisiana, and scientists say addressing the role of a changing climate is crucial to spending that money effectively.

Fred Wagner, a lawyer who counseled the city of New Orleans in rebuilding its downtown medical center after Hurricane Katrina, said communities that want to spend more to rebuild smarter, with bigger and more frequent flooding in mind, will need to be able to point to climate change, even if they just call it "resiliency."

"It makes justifying the investment in those features much more acceptable, much more palatable," he said.

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## **GAO to probe Zinke call to Murkowski** [Back](#)

By Alex Guillén | 09/08/2017 05:12 PM EDT

The Government Accountability Office will look into Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's calls to Alaska Sens. [Lisa Murkowski](#) and [Dan Sullivan](#) over Obamacare repeal, according to [letters](#) sent today.

Two key House Democrats, Reps. [Frank Pallone](#) and [Raul Grijalva](#), asked GAO to provide a legal opinion on the July calls, during which Zinke reportedly told Murkowski that her vote against moving forward with repeal efforts could negatively impact Alaskan energy goals in the Trump administration.

Interior's inspector general already [concluded](#) its own inquiry into the matter without making any findings after both senators declined to discuss the calls with investigators.



**WHAT'S NEXT:** GAO's letter does not specify how long the inquiry might take.

*To view online [click here](#).*

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### **Interior IG probing Zinke's senior staff reshuffle [Back](#)**

By Esther Whieldon | 09/08/2017 05:09 PM EDT

The Interior Department's internal watchdog has launched a probe into Secretary Ryan Zinke's June reassignment of a number of senior executive staff, an official told POLITICO today.

The inspector general's office is auditing Zinke's decision to [reassign](#) dozens of senior executive service employees, including Joel Clement, who was moved from a managerial position involving climate change issues to a job collecting royalties from oil and gas companies. The office has begun interviewing key agency staff and asked the secretary's office to hand over documents, IG spokeswoman Nancy DiPaolo said.

The audit follows a [request](#) in July from Sen. [Maria Cantwell](#) (D-Wash.) and seven of her colleagues for Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall to look into the matter.

Depending on what the audit uncovers, it could lead to a broader investigation to determine whether any laws were broken.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** DiPaolo said the IG hopes to wrap up its work within a few months.

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### **White House to nominate heads for FHWA, PHMSA [Back](#)**

By Tanya Snyder | 09/08/2017 08:20 PM EDT

President Donald Trump announced tonight that he will nominate Paul Trombino to head the Federal Highway Administration and Howard "Skip" Elliott to run the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

Trombino was director of the Iowa Department of Transportation from 2011 to 2016. He unexpectedly resigned from his post in Iowa last November and in December became president of the McClure Engineering Company, a civil engineering firm.

Before his stint in Iowa, Trombino worked at the Wisconsin DOT for 17 years, most recently serving as director of the Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Rails and Harbors.

Trombino served as president of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials for the 2015-2016 term and as the 2016 vice chair of the Transportation Research Board Executive Committee.

Trump also tapped Howard "Skip" Elliott, an award-winning 40-year veteran of the U.S. freight rail industry, for administrator of PHMSA. Elliott is vice president of public safety, health, environment and security for CSX Transportation in Jacksonville, Fla., with a portfolio that included hazardous materials transportation safety, crisis management, and environmental compliance.

According to the White House, Elliott "is a pioneer and leading advocate in developing and implementing computer-based tools to assist emergency management officials, first responders, and homeland security personnel in preparing for and responding to a railroad hazardous materials or security incident."

Elliott received a lifetime achievement award from the Association of American Railroads for his work on hazardous materials transportation safety.

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### **Solar sector rattled by trade case, Trump rhetoric [Back](#)**

By Esther Whieldon, Eric Wolff and Andrew Restuccia | 09/08/2017 05:03 PM EDT

A looming trade commission ruling on the surging imports of solar equipment to the U.S. and President Donald Trump's impatience on creating trade barriers are raising fears among many in the solar industry they could see a tariff that stunts the sector's sharp growth.

The U.S. International Trade Commission will decide later this month whether foreign companies are harming U.S. solar cell makers with their shipments of solar equipment into the country. And if it does find damage, it would recommend a remedy — and ultimately hand the final decision off to Trump to decide whether to impose tariffs.

The complaint filed by solar manufacturers Suniva and SolarWorld USA to the ITC only needs to show that surging imports harmed the domestic industry, which appears to be backed up by data showing a five-fold increase in imports from 2012 to 2016 and the closure of more than half the U.S. cell manufacturing sites over that period.

Trump has frequently complained that U.S. companies were suffering from unfair competition from foreign countries — particularly China, whose companies dominate solar manufacturing — and he is very likely to support tariffs against the solar imports if the ITC sends the complaint to the White House, according to a senior administration official.

The official said the president is increasingly frustrated with advisers recommending a cautious approach to trade.

But many in the U.S. solar business say that setting up tariffs or floor prices for imports, as Suniva has suggested, could pose some political risks for Trump because of solar technology's broad popularity, as well the growing clout of the workforce that sells and installs the systems.

The politics of this "might get wrapped up in Trump's desire to beat his chest," said Jigar Shah, founder of solar installer SunEdison now at specialty finance company Generate Capital, and who opposes tariffs. "These are all the people that basically thought that the U.S. economy had left them behind and voted for Trump. This is a policy that would directly negatively impact Trump's base."

Solar power costs have tumbled to less than a quarter of the price a decade ago, largely because of declines in the prices of cells and panels driven by low-cost production from Chinese companies. That has helped spur a surge in both large-utility scale installations as well as small rooftop systems for homeowners and businesses.

Opponents of trade barriers, including the industry lobby group Solar Energy Industry Association, contend that using the authority that was last applied by President George W. Bush would drive up the price of solar panels and eliminate 88,000 jobs, a third of the industry's U.S. workers.

Many of those jobs are in states Trump won narrowly in 2016: North Carolina, Arizona and Florida, which are all among the top 10 in the country in solar jobs, according to a report from the advocacy group The Solar Foundation.

But supporters of tariffs — including the Steel Manufacturers Association — are pressing Trump to put in place barriers to stem the flow of cheap solar cells and modules that have pushed many U.S. manufacturers — including Suniva — into bankruptcy. Suniva and SolarWorld contend that resurrecting the U.S. solar manufacturing sector would generate about 16,000 manufacturing jobs "in very short order" and increase overall related employment by about 45,500 jobs.

"The U.S. solar manufacturing industry must be provided meaningful relief to ensure that thousands of American manufacturing jobs are not permanently exported overseas," Suniva and SolarWorld said in an emailed statement.

They added that "Any criticism of a remedy is a vote for sending American manufacturing jobs to China and its proxies."

The ITC decision on whether the imports harmed U.S. manufacturers is due Sept. 22. If it finds harm, it would send its recommendations to the White House in November, and a final decision from Trump would be expected after the beginning of the new year.

Trump could face pushback from lawmakers if his big trade decisions hurt their constituents, said Tori Whiting of The Heritage Foundation, noting the political and international pressure that prompted Bush to pull back tariffs on steel imports less than two years after he imposed them in 2002.

And new tariffs could ultimately spur Congress to jump into the issue, she said.

"Congress has given up a lot of its authority when it comes to decisions made on trade and on the changing on barriers and tariffs," Whiting said. A strong move by the White House on solar or steel imports "could motivate Congress to ... reassert their constitutional powers."

Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah) in January introduced a bill, S. 177 (115), that would subject all of a president's trade actions to congressional approval with exceptions regarding protecting national security.

So far, more than 70 lawmakers from both parties have weighed in on the case in letters to the trade commission, with the majority pushing for the ITC to not impose new solar tariffs.

But most lawmakers from states that are home to Suniva and SolarWorld factories in Oregon, Michigan and Georgia say they back the manufacturers' petition, including Reps. Kurt Schrader (D-Ore.) and Dan Kildee (D-Mich.).

"China is illegally dumping below-cost solar panels on the marketplace. They've been doing it for years," Schrader said, noting that SolarWorld won anti-dumping and countervailing duty sanctions against Chinese and Taiwanese-made solar products in 2012 and 2015. But those measures had little impact, since Chinese companies shifted much of their production to other Asian nations not covered by the duties.

Kildee told POLITICO he viewed the issue as "really a question as to whether we're going to abdicate manufacturing to other places around the world."

But Sen. David Perdue's (R-Ga.) August letter, co-signed by 15 other senators, argued that the proposed "tariffs would especially hurt residential rooftop solar projects that are rapidly growing." Solar installers comprised more than half of Georgia's 4,000-person solar workforce in 2016 about 2-1/2 times the number employed in solar manufacturing jobs there.

Both of Suniva's Georgia and Michigan factories are shuttered after the company sought bankruptcy protection.

The issue is further complicated over exactly who the tariffs would protect, since Suniva and SolarWorld USA have foreign owners. American financiers pushed Suniva to file the trade case, but Shunfeng International Clean Energy Ltd. owns a majority stake in the company. While SolarWorld USA is an arm of Germany's SolarWorld Industries.

"These are foreign multi-nationals but they have manufacturing in the U.S., That's the distinction. And you have domestic companies addicted to foreign imports," said Robert Scott, a senior economist with the Economic Policy Institute. "That seems awkward, and that's one of the reasons I suspect that Trump may be hesitant to act in this case. There are no clear domestic interests at stake and there are now increasingly clear domestic enterprises who could lose."

Still, Trump has re-opened the NAFTA free trade deal with Canada and Mexico in search of a revamp more to his liking, and has taken a protectionist posture in an attempt to reverse various other trade agreements, complaining they are "bad deals" that hurt American workers. The solar case could present him with an opportunity to show he's following through on his get-tough pledges. He regularly calls out other countries — even tiny Finland — for having a trade surplus with the United States, and he has put trade hawks like Peter Navarro and Robert Lighthizer in key administration posts.

At a meeting in the Oval Office earlier in August Trump told chief of staff John Kelly, "This is

my view. I want tariffs. And I want someone to bring me some tariffs," Axios reported.

If the commission sends the case to Trump in November, he would not be limited by the agency's recommendations and could even try to negotiate a deal with other countries to avoid angering allies he needs to keep on his side for bigger fights.

"I think it's catnip to the base and irresistible to the president," said Paul Bledsoe, a strategic advisor at the Progressive Policy Institute, a left-leaning policy think tank. "I see very little downside to him acting on it. I think it's a classic kind of far right conservative argument: 'Isn't it ironic the lefties don't even protect their own solar manufacturers,' kind of thing."

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**From:** Michael Doyle  
**Sent:** 2017-09-11T10:54:40-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** IG  
**Received:** 2017-09-11T10:54:50-04:00

Good morning:

I just got this, that OIG is in the middle of inquiry into SES reassignments; sorry for last-minute, but would welcome comment.

We are looking into the SES moves, but not the Joel Clement situation. Mr. Clement's is being handled by OSC.

An OIG Audit team is conducting interviews and will be analyzing documents that we've requested from the Department.

Nancy K. DiPaolo  
Director, External Affairs

Michael Doyle  
Reporter  
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**To:** alex\_hinson@ios.doi.gov[alex\_hinson@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Heather Swift  
**Sent:** 2017-09-11T10:57:32-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Fwd: IG  
**Received:** 2017-09-11T10:57:41-04:00

Alex please send me the statement we use for SES reassignment. Don't include Clement part.

Heather Swift  
Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Michael Doyle <[mdoyle@eenews.net](mailto:mdoyle@eenews.net)>  
**Date:** September 11, 2017 at 10:54:40 AM EDT  
**To:** Heather Swift <[heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** IG

Good morning:

I just got this, that OIG is in the middle of inquiry into SES reassignments; sorry for last-minute, but would welcome comment.

We are looking into the SES moves, but not the Joel Clement situation. Mr. Clement's is being handled by OSC.

An OIG Audit team is conducting interviews and will be analyzing documents that we've requested from the Department.

Nancy K. DiPaolo  
Director, External Affairs

Michael Doyle  
Reporter  
[mdoyle@eenews.net](mailto:mdoyle@eenews.net)  
202-446-0467 x467  
@MichaelDoyle10

**E&E NEWS**

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Energywire, Climatewire, Greenwire, E&E Daily, E&E News PM

**To:** Heather Swift[[heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)]  
**From:** Hinson, Alex  
**Sent:** 2017-09-11T11:00:21-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: IG  
**Received:** 2017-09-11T11:00:29-04:00

**Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI:**

The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees.

The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency.

Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

On Mon, Sep 11, 2017 at 10:57 AM, Heather Swift <[heather\\_swift@ios.doi.gov](mailto:heather_swift@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Alex please send me the statement we use for SES reassignment. Don't include Clement part.

Heather Swift  
Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior

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Alex Hinson

Deputy Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
C: 202-641-5381

**To:** Hinson, Alex[alex\_hinson@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Heather Swift  
**Sent:** 2017-09-11T11:01:56-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** Re: IG  
**Received:** 2017-09-11T11:02:04-04:00

Please send to Mike and CC me.

Heather Swift  
Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior

On Sep 11, 2017, at 11:00 AM, Hinson, Alex <[alex\\_hinson@ios.doi.gov](mailto:alex_hinson@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

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Alex Hinson

Deputy Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
C: 202-641-5381

**To:** Heather Swift[heather\_swift@ios.doi.gov]; Russell Newell[russell\_newell@ios.doi.gov]; Laura Rigas[Laura\_Rigas@ios.doi.gov]; Eli Nachmany[eli\_nachmany@ios.doi.gov]  
**From:** Hinson, Alex  
**Sent:** 2017-09-11T15:26:39-04:00  
**Importance:** Normal  
**Subject:** DOI Daily Comms  
**Received:** 2017-09-11T15:27:41-04:00  
[WH Daily comms update 9-11.docx](#)

**INTERIOR**  
**WASHINGTON**  
9/11/2017

**DAILY COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

**TO:** White House Cabinet Affairs Communications

**FROM:** Heather Swift & Laura Rigas

**SUBJECT:** Communications Update

**TV Hits:**

- [Fox News: Secretary Zinke joins 'Fox and Friends'](#)
- [Secretary Zinke gives remarks at Flight 93 National Memorial-Part 1](#)
- [Secretary Zinke gives remarks at Flight 93 National Memorial-Part 2](#)

**Press Inquiries:**

- Many small inquiries.
- **\*Double Inquiry\***-Politico (Ben Lefebvre) E&E News (Michael Doyle) - **REQUEST**— I just got this, that OIG is in the middle of inquiry into SES reassignments; sorry for last-minute, but would welcome comment. We are looking into the SES moves, but not the Joel Clement situation.--**RESPONSE**— Regarding the shuffling of SES at DOI: The President signed an executive order to reorganize the federal government for the future and the Secretary has been absolutely out front on that issue. In fact, he mentioned a Department-wide, front lines-focused reorganization on his first day address to all employees. The purpose of the Senior Executive Service is to ensure that the executive management of the government of the United States is responsive to the needs, policies, and goals of the Nation and otherwise is of the highest quality. Senior executives are the highest paid employees in the federal government and signed up for the SES knowing that they could be called upon to work in different positions at any time. Congress meant for the SES to be a mobile force that are capable of taking on different assignments to meet the needs of the agency. Personnel moves among the Senior Executive Service are being conducted to better serve the taxpayer and the Department's operations.

**Top Stories**

- **Washington Examiner:** Fox News host asks Ryan Zinke if 9/11 memorials will be taken down next
- **Washington Times:** Ryan Zinke: Monuments shouldn't be taken down but learned from
- **E&E News:** IG looking into why senior staffers were moved
- **THE HILL:** GAO to investigate Zinke's alleged Alaskan threat: report
- **THE HILL:** Zinke on Irma: 'Leave no neighborhood behind'

#### **Top Issues and Accomplishments**

- Interior continues to support all Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma efforts. All bureaus are executing their emergency plans and assisting in Hurricane relief.
- Today, Secretary Zinke was in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, for the dedication of the September 11<sup>th</sup> memorial where United flight 93 crashed.
- Secretary Zinke is also in NYC, where he did a live Fox and Friends hit and then participated in the Ground Zero September 11<sup>th</sup> memorial ceremony.
- PLANNED MEDIA while in NYC - Fox and Friends, Sirius XM Radio, Varney and Co

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Alex Hinson

Deputy Press Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
C: 202-641-5381